

WINTER, 1953-54

# RELIGION IN LIFE

Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

*A Christian Quarterly*  
OF OPINION AND DISCUSSION

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RELIGION IN LIFE is published quarterly by Abingdon-Cokesbury Press at \$1.25 per copy. Subscription price, \$4.00 per year in the United States and possessions and Mexico; Canada, postage 18 cents per year additional; other foreign postage 30 cents per year additional.

Publication office, 810 Broadway, Nashville 2, Tennessee. Editorial office, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, New York. Entered as Second Class Matter, August 26, 1942, at the post office in Nashville, Tennessee, under Act of March 3, 1879. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided in Section 1103, Act of Oct. 3, 1917, authorized March 16, 1923.



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## John Wesley on the Holy Spirit

THE author of faith and salvation is God alone. It is he that works in us both to will and to do. He is the sole Giver of every good gift, and the sole Author of every good work. There is no more of power than of merit in man; but as all merit is in the Son of God, in what he has done and suffered for us, so all power is in the Spirit of God. And therefore every man, in order to believe unto salvation, must receive the Holy Ghost. This is essentially necessary to every Christian, not in order to his working miracles, but in order to faith, peace, joy, and love—the ordinary fruits of the Spirit.

Although no man on earth can explain the particular manner wherein the Spirit of God works on the soul, yet whosoever has these fruits, cannot but know and *feel* that God has wrought them in his heart.

Sometimes He acts more particularly on the understanding, opening or enlightening it (as the Scripture speaks), and revealing, unveiling, discovering to us "the deep things of God."

Sometimes He acts on the wills and affections of men; withdrawing them from evil, inclining them to good, inspiring (breathing, as it were) good thoughts into them: So it has frequently been expressed by an easy natural metaphor, strictly analogous to רוח, πνευμα, *spiritus*, and the words used in most modern tongues also, to denote the third person in the ever-blessed Trinity. But however it be expressed, it is certain all true faith, and the whole work of salvation, every good thought, word, and work, is altogether by the operation of the Spirit of God.

—*Works*: "A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion." I, 6 (VIII, 49).

# Spirit, Son, and Father

From HENRY P. VAN DUSEN

## I

CHRISTIAN FAITH PROCLAIMS a God who is "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." The Athanasian Creed declares: "The Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one—the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal. . . . In this Trinity none is before or after other, none is greater or less than another; but the whole three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal."

Traditionally, Christian theology, in expounding its conception of Deity, has made its start with "God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth"; has then passed on to "Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord"; and has come at last (sometimes at long last) to "the Holy Spirit." Sometimes, however, Christian theologians have begun with Christ, and then gone on to consider God-in-the-light-of-Christ, and finally the Holy Spirit. This is the guiding principle of all "Christocentric" theologies.

Seldom if ever has Christian interpretation first examined the Holy Spirit, and then God-in-the-light-of-the-Holy-Spirit, and Christ-in-the-light-of-the-Holy-Spirit. That is the experiment we are to attempt. What we are here proposing is to begin our thought with the Holy Spirit, as though the Great Commission attributed to the Risen Christ had been to baptize "in the name of the Holy Spirit, and of the Son, and of the Father"; or as though the great Pauline Blessing had been phrased, "The fellowship of the Holy Spirit, and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God be with you all"; or as though our creed declared, "I believe in the Holy Spirit—and in Jesus Christ our Lord—and in God the Father Almighty."

Our purpose, then, is to confront the query: What is the bearing of the Holy Spirit upon the other major elements within Christian belief? What, if any, light is cast by Christian thought of the Holy Spirit upon the Christian understanding of man, of Christ, and of God?

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HENRY P. VAN DUSEN, Ph.D., D.D., is President of Union Theological Seminary and prominent in the work of the World Council of Churches. This paper is a substantially condensed version of his Presidential Address read before the American Theological Society on April 10, 1953.

## II

The necessary condensation of this essay has required elimination of much which is essential to the argument, especially a survey of the background and development of the Christian idea of the Holy Spirit. That historical introduction may be summarized as follows:

1. The concept of "Divine Spirit" is by no means an exclusively or even distinctively Christian conviction. It appears in many religions of both the ancient and the modern worlds. It signifies an influence proceeding from the Divine Being, marked by the bestowal of exceptional powers and closely related to the life of man—*God Mighty* and *God Near*.

2. In Hebraic thought, "spirit" is the principle of life in nature and man. Two features characterize almost all references to Divine Spirit—*intimacy* and *potency*. The Spirit of God is *God-at-hand* and *God-at-work*.

3. In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit is given definitive meaning by the Apostle Paul through linkage with Christ: Spirit which is the Holy Spirit which is the Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ. Two results follow. Thought of the Spirit is ethicized: its unfailing fruits are love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; and by its fruits is it to be known. And the Holy Spirit is the indwelling reality of the Christian life: to be in Christ is to be in the Spirit and to have the Spirit of Christ dwell within one, sanctifying the whole of life.

4. In the history of Christian thought, the operations of the Holy Spirit are confined first to Scripture and then to the Church. At the Reformation, only "radical Protestantism" reclaimed freedom for the Spirit as the agency of God's personal self-disclosure and transforming power upon the individual Christian in his inmost soul.

## III

First, what light does the Holy Spirit contribute to the Christian understanding of man?

The Holy Spirit casts helpful light upon our understanding of man at two points; so to say, at opposite poles of the Christian interpretation of man—its starting-point and its conclusion: our conception of man's beginning, his given nature—and our vision of man's destiny, his ideal end.

1. In its first beginnings within the Hebraic-Christian tradition, far back on the dim borderland of prehistory, Spirit was thought of, not as the principle of spiritual life, that which distinguishes man from the rest of animate nature, or even as the source of life itself, that which distinguishes

man-as-animal from inanimate nature, but as energy at work throughout all Nature. Only later, though still very early among our records, was Spirit in all its manifestations attributed to Divine activity; Spirit is now the Spirit of God. And as the evidences of spirit throughout Nature were traced to the Divine Spirit as their source, so that same Divine Spirit was recognized as the bestower of spirit upon man. One of our most trustworthy authorities on early Hebraic anthropology, Dr. Wheeler Robinson, declares: "The careful study of the Old Testament in its true chronological order will reveal that as 'wind' became 'Spirit' in relation to God, so 'Spirit' [i.e., Divine Spirit] became 'spirit' in man."<sup>1</sup>

It is well that we should accept and not disavow this primitive Hebraic insight, for it affirms what is as necessary for true thought about man as it is valuable in inducing true humility in man—that we are rooted in Nature, bone of inanimate nature's bone, but also flesh of animate nature's flesh. Our passions have their sources in those of the beasts, from whom we are sprung; and they never permit us to forget or deny that lowly origin. But so, also, our affections and our fidelities—even the loftiest of them such as parental solicitude or communal loyalty or self-sacrifice—have their anticipations in the highest levels of animal life. He who created us created all, and he who breathed the breath of life into man to constitute him a living soul did not withhold his life-bestowing Spirit from any part of his creation.

The Christian view of man begins with the story of man's creation as man. The more primitive account of creation in the second chapter of Genesis stands, in some respects, on a far lower plane than the later account which precedes it in the first chapter. But it focuses on one declaration: The Lord God breathed the breath of life into man's inanimate body, "and man became a living soul." That is to say, the Divine Breath or Spirit is the very principle, the cause and secret, of man's spiritual being or soul. This is the earlier creation story's version of the later and loftier account's interpretation of the origin of man: "God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.' . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him."

Few topics have more divided theologians than the *imago Dei*. What is it? How is it to be identified? And how defined?

There have been those who have sought to locate the "image of God" in *man's rational faculties*, the powers of memory, of anticipation, and of reason which seem most sharply to mark him off from the rest of animate

<sup>1</sup> Robinson, H. Wheeler, *The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit*. Harper & Brothers, 1928, p. 13.

creation. But, happily for man's humility, vast as is the difference in degree between man and the higher animals in these respects, it does not appear possible to establish a sharp dividing line here. For certain of the higher apes display quite extraordinary powers of reasoning; not to speak of phenomenal gifts of memory in birds, for example, their always inexplicable and well-nigh unbelievable "homing instinct"; and of anticipation in many animals, such as most animals' shrewd provisions against future needs. The fact that these traits are apparently rooted within the instincts, at a level far subrational, does not alter their character or diminish their marvel. All this is strong confirmation from Nature for a true Christian view's firm refusal to find the secret of man in his rational faculties, since it is the pure of heart not the clever of intellect who know God, and it is given to the childlike to comprehend what is hidden from the wise.

Others have discovered the "image of God" in *the noblest in man's emotional life*, his affections and fidelities and capacity for self-abnegation. But this identification is likewise denied by the presence of these same traits—even the loftiest of them such as parental concern or group loyalty or readiness for self-sacrifice—in almost the whole range of animal creation, however elemental their expression and instinctive their dynamic.

Still another view finds the "image of God" in *the moral consciousness*, the categorical imperative to duty. But here, likewise, there are subhuman anticipations. Even those fish which, in response to a "categorical imperative" lodged in their instincts, sacrifice their lives that another generation may have life are obeying a law of Nature which imposes upon them an irresistible command. And the St. Bernard dogs who hazard death for man's succor are not without some dim sense of duty.

We are led closer to the truth by the interpretation, most fully and persuasively urged in our day by Dr. Emil Brunner,<sup>2</sup> that the *imago Dei* is, specifically, *man's awareness of God* as One demanding the complete surrender of his life. For there appears to be no evidence that even the most developed animals recognize a higher Power beyond Nature and man.

However, the fontal account of the "image of God" in Genesis 1 and 2, upon which all subsequent speculation as to the *imago Dei* in Christian theology is grounded, assumes a far more intimate lodgement of the Divine within man than is implied in the capacity to recognize and respond to God, priceless in its significance as that is. Dr. Brunner states:

<sup>2</sup> See his essay in the Oxford Conference volume on *The Christian Understanding of Man* (Willett Clark, 1937) and his fuller exposition in *Man in Revolt* (Scribner, 1939) and *The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption* (Westminster, 1952).



The Bible expresses the distinctive quality of man by saying that he stands in a special relation to God, that the relation between God and man is that of "over-againstness"; that it consists in being face to face with each other. . . .

It is his relation to God which makes man man. This is the content of the biblical doctrine of the *imago dei*.<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Brunner is surely right in saying that the Bible affirms that "man stands in a special relation to God" and that "it is his relation to God which makes man man." He is surely mistaken in adding that "the relation is that of 'over-againstness'." On the contrary, the earlier account of the origin of man in Genesis declares that God breathed his own breath into man. Authentic Christian thought recognizes that God has lodged within man something of his own Being, his Spirit, so that the basic relation of God and man is not "over-againstness" but rather *kinship* of essential nature. This recognition has profound implications for all the rest of our thought of man, especially his salvation.

In summary, the "image of God" in man is that bestowal of Divine Spirit which, because it is God's gift of his own Spirit, recognizes him who has made him and whose he is. Such "lodgment" of Divine Spirit within man is, as both tales of creation in Genesis imply, common to all men everywhere. And of that truth, the well-nigh universal "sense of the Divine" is empirical verification.

2. That initial gift of Spirit in man's creation does not represent the last initiative of God with respect to man's soul, however, but only the first. Sound logic, no less than the testimony of the saints, declares that the living Spirit, which has created and even now pervades and sustains all, must be ceaselessly active, seeking to draw those in whom he has been pleased to place his Spirit into ever fuller communion of spirit with himself. And so, the proper destiny of man, dictated by his given nature in creation, is—unity of spirit, human spirit with Divine Spirit. Given kinship furnishes the ground for, and finds fulfillment in, communion. Thus we are carried directly to the far pole of the human pilgrimage—*man's ideal end*.

Here, again, we confront variant interpretations. One, in particular, deserves our special attention. Starting, in true fidelity to the highest Hebrew conception, with God as Righteous Sovereign whose Law demands man's unconditional obedience, whose Purposes require for their fulfillment man's co-operation, and in whose Will is to be discovered man's peace, it thinks of the highest relationship of God and man in terms of *will*, the surrender of man's will to the Divine Will, made possible by the gift of grace and

<sup>3</sup> Brunner, E., in *The Christian Understanding of Man*, pp. 158, 159.

issuing in full alignment of human purpose with Divine Design. Yet, it has been a true instinct to which the mystics have been especially sensitive which has discerned that this interpretation envisions the ideal Divine-human relation in terms too external, as it tends to think of God in ideas too exclusively and narrowly anthropomorphic. It needs to be permeated by recognition of God's Holy Spirit.

This necessity comes home upon us when we examine more closely man's own nature. Speaking of the "essential difference between moral freedom and the freedom of the spirit," Professor George Thomas has written:

The moral will is the self moving towards a good that is not yet attained but is capable of being realized by action. Its freedom is an effortful freedom. Will is the initiative of the self, burdened by the limitations of the self. But the spirit is the self opening itself to universal truth and loving universal good. The spirit's activity is not initiated with painful effort but lured by the appeal of a higher life. . . . It is self forgetting and rising above self. It is not so much self striving for the universal as self laid hold of by the universal. Thus spiritual freedom is that which is achieved through devotion to universal truth and good.<sup>4</sup>

For the abstract terms "universal truth" and "universal good," substitute the personal terms of Christian faith, and we have a good report of Christian freedom: "The spirit is the self opening itself to the Divine Spirit. . . . It is not so much self striving for God as self laid hold of by God's Holy Spirit. Thus spiritual freedom is that which is achieved through devotion to (better, possession by) the Holy Spirit." This is his service which is "perfect freedom."

Inevitably, our minds are drawn back to Paul's eighth chapter of Romans:

I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. . . . Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! . . . For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free. . . . To set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. . . . You are in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God really dwells in you. . . . If Christ is in you, your spirits are alive. . . . If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you. . . . For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. . . . It is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God. (Rom. 7 and 8, R.S.V.)

All this is so because the Spirit is the Holy Spirit, that is the Spirit of God, which is the Spirit of Christ.

This modification or supplementation of "will" by "spirit" thus greatly

<sup>4</sup> Thomas, George F., *Spirit and Its Freedom*. University of North Carolina Press, 1939, pp. 110, 111.

enriches and empowers our thought of the Christian life, especially man's ideal end. It has even more profound consequences for the interpretation of Christ, to which we shall shortly return.

3. Paul's great exposition in Romans 8 is, of course, set against the background of perhaps the most authentic and devastating exposure of *human sinfulness* ever phrased, in Romans 7. And we have thus, already, had set before us the major part of the meaning of the Holy Spirit for the problem of *sin*—God's instrument of deliverance from the grip of sin.

There is another aspect of the total reality of sin, however, in some ways far more poignant and perplexing, and strangely by-passed in most classical Christian treatments of the problem. For any serious examination of sin discloses that it lays upon us a burden far heavier than is encompassed even in the *stain* of sin which must be erased, and the *grip* of sin which must be broken, and the *guilt* of sin which must be forgiven. There are also the *social consequences* of sin—the measureless and exhaustless and irretrievable harm which our sins have disseminated out through the body of humanity, as a pebble dropped in the sea sends its ripples in ever-widening circles until finally every drop in the ocean is affected and every shore touched by its influence. Christ's holiness may purify us of the *stains* of sin; the power of his Spirit may break the *grip* of sin upon our lives; God's forgiveness mediated by him may ease our *guilt*; all together may prompt us to attempt to overtake the wrong we have done directly to others and to seek their forgiveness. But, what about the wider circle of harm which has gone forth from us through them, and is reaching out even now into the common life to touch with blight every one of our fellow-men, and will continue to stain and pervert and curse humankind unto the tenth and hundredth generation? Here, I would urge, is the deepest agony of sin. What can we do about that?

Very little, indeed, even if our whole life hereafter be given wholly, as it should be, to the redemption of our evil influence, for time and for eternity. But, if the Holy Spirit be the ceaseless, tireless activity of Divine holiness and purification at work through *all* mankind and through *all* history, may there be easement for our despair, especially if that Holy Spirit so dwell within us that it uses us, yes, even us, as agencies for its transforming and redeeming work? Something like that Dr. Wheeler Robinson suggests, in one of the profoundest and most moving passages of *The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit*:

The disclosure of God's essential nature through Christ in the Holy Spirit awakens the faith that our sins are forgiven. . . . Yet there remains the irrevocable

fact of sin, for which we are personally responsible, though penitent and forgiven. There is a transformed present; does not the full work of grace also mean a transformed past? It is here that the crowning work of the Holy Spirit must be done. Our own past acquires a new meaning by our changed attitude towards it, wrought by the Holy Spirit within us, and the memory of sin may thus become a means of grace. But this partial and individual transformation by the Holy Spirit suggests a complete and racial transformation of realized evil in human history by the Spirit. We often say that a sinful world redeemed by grace is spiritually richer than a sinless world could ever have been. But this is really to say that God is Spirit, and therefore able to transform even the evil that man has done into good. Faith in God means faith in such an ultimate transformation *sub specie aeternitatis*, and it is the present experience of the transforming power of the Holy Spirit which gives to us our partial and individual glimpse of that divine consummation.<sup>5</sup>

This, I would hold, is the final, and most exalted, and alone satisfying, word of Christian Faith regarding sin. And it is a word of the Holy Spirit.

#### IV

"I believe in the Holy Spirit . . . and in Jesus Christ, our Lord."

What difference would it make if not simply the words of the creed but Christian thinking were to follow that order? As a matter of fact, it might be contended that this is the proper order, as it was certainly the chronological order in the Christian apprehension of Christ and the Holy Spirit. While some churchmen speak as though the Holy Spirit became known to men for the first time on the Day of Pentecost as the gift of Christ to his church, recognition of the Holy Spirit long antedated the advent of Christ. However sudden and spectacular its coming upon the first disciples, they recognized it as a fresh outpouring of the same Spirit of God which had spoken and acted all through their nation's history, even from the forming of the world. The newness lay, not in the reality of the Holy Spirit itself, but in the vividness and power of its return.

The problem of the interpretation of Jesus Christ has been, from the outset, a dual one, posed in these two questions:

How are we to think of Christ's relation to God?

*and*

How are we to conceive the relation of the divine and the human in Jesus of Nazareth?

The church turned its attention to the two aspects of the problem in that order. It moved to its final answers in two steps, each marked by two "ecumenical" conferences. The answers were:

Christ was divine, "of the same substance as the Father."

<sup>5</sup> Robinson, H. W., *op. cit.*, p. 212.

Jesus of Nazareth was both fully divine and truly human.

The principal preoccupation of Christian theology for three centuries was with the first question—to determine *Christ's relation to God*. The upshot was the unqualified affirmation, first at the Council of Nicaea in 325 and then at the First Council of Constantinople in 381, that Christ was truly divine, “of the same substance as the Father.”

What, then, are we to say of his human life? Upon that question, Christological thought for the next three centuries was focused. The reply was formulated by the Council of Chalcedon in 425: Christ was “perfect in deity and perfect in humanity” . . . “God truly and man truly.” This formula was made more precise by the Sixth Council of Constantinople in 680 in the declaration that Jesus had two wills, a divine and a human, and two energies fully operative.

That those statements rightly define Christian belief concerning Jesus Christ has never been seriously challenged. But, *how* are we to conceive *what* they declare? It is precisely at this troublous point that an approach to thought of Christ by way of the Holy Spirit may offer helpful light.

The attempt to think out *how* Christ could have been both divine and human moved along two alternative lines, one using the idea of “substance” and the other relying upon the concept of “will.” As the words of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed indicate, during the earlier period when the aim was to establish the unqualified deity of Christ, the first alternative was followed and the relation of Christ to God was defined in terms of “substance.” But in the later period, when the purpose was to vindicate the reality of Jesus’ humanity, the second alternative employing the term “will” triumphed. Neither line of thought—in terms of “substance” or of “will”—was fully satisfactory and neither ever succeeded in winning the wholehearted assent of the whole church. “Substance,” less to the creedal centuries than to us, but even then, suggests something which is less than truly personal—a mixture of divine and human essences, which is at far remove from the kinship of two personal beings so clearly set forth upon the pages of the Gospels. Since the major concern of the earlier centuries was to assure Christ’s deity, his true humanity always tended to be impugned. Contrariwise, while the affirmation of a human “will” in Jesus of Nazareth protected the reality of his human life, the assertion that in him there were two “wills” fully present and operative suggests a monstrosity, neither true man nor yet true God.

If choice must be made between these two alternatives, the second is to be preferred, as indeed it was by the later creed-makers. But we do not



feel wholly satisfied by that interpretation, in terms of the agreement of a divine and a human will. The relationship so described is, after all, still an external one—two independent centers of moral purpose acting always in complete harmony. Christian Faith has always felt that the relationship of Jesus to his Father was more intimate, more interior than these terms suggest. Something which the earlier rendering in terms of "substance," with all its failure to recognize the truly personal character of both God and Christ, rightly safeguarded, has been lost.

To think of both God and Christ in terms of "spirit" promises to give us a more adequate comprehension and expression of their relationship.

A hint in that direction is furnished by the most intimate relationship between two human persons. Kinship of ideals, identity of purposes, harmony of wills suggests a relationship of great and mutually enriching intimacy. But marriage in its ideal fulfillment, even friendship at its highest levels, knows a unity which is deeper, richer, more pervasive—an interdependence and mutuality more complete and indissoluble—when two persons, unconsciously, undeliberately, inevitably, think the same thoughts, feel the same emotions, desire the same good, as well as will the same ends. This is a communion of spirit whereby two persons have become, to all intents and purposes, one.

We draw closer to our goal when we reflect upon our own experience of the indwelling of God's Spirit within our spirits.

We cannot hope to separate the Spirit of God from the spirit of man, and to make God somehow an "object" of our consciousness, like other objects. . . . Such controversies as those between the Calvinist and the Arminian as to divine grace and human freedom are not so much settled as superseded; we have caught a deeper glimpse of Christian experience, in its unity. We have learnt to say: "There is no spiritual power but in God. The well of water, springing up within us, is His Spirit, given at the first, increased from time to time, through the working of this Spirit in the lives and writings of man, and made permanent at last by the appearing of Christ, and our conscious acceptance of Him and His Holy Spirit. . . . God's work all of it, and man's work all of it."<sup>6</sup>

This fact of Christian experience is expressed classically in Paul's great word, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). Had Paul joined this word to the Galatians with his closely parallel word to the Romans (8:9) on the Spirit, might he not as well have said: "It is no longer I who live; the Spirit of Christ which is the Spirit of God which is the Holy Spirit, lives in me"? This is "the communion of the Holy Spirit" which, in ideal, is to be ours always.

<sup>6</sup> Robinson, H. W., *op. cit.*, p. 203.

If this be the truest, most adequate rendering of the realities of consummate Christian experience—the indubitable fact of the experience of the Christian man in whom Christ dwells—how much more appropriately may it suggest the inmost being of Jesus Christ! What is imperfectly true of us, was, for him and in him, perfectly realized; so that he might have paraphrased Paul's declaration as his own: "I live; yet not I, but the Father lives in me"; or as the Fourth Gospel puts it: "I and the Father are one." Quite literally, God dwelt in him fully, wholly—the Holy Spirit which is the Spirit of God his Father—as fully and completely as God's Holy Spirit can possess a truly human life.

How could this be? What if the Logos, which the Fourth Evangelist sets as the prologue to his Gospel and which the church theologians took up and made their central term to interpret the Incarnation, had been recognized, not as the Word of God or as the pre-existent Christ, but as the Holy Spirit?

In the beginning was the Spirit, and the Spirit was with God, and the Spirit was God. . . . All things were made through him. . . . In him was life, and the life was the light of men. . . . That was the true light, which enlightens every man that cometh into the world. . . . And the Spirit became flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.

However, the illumination for our thought cast by reflection upon the relations of the Holy Spirit and Christ is not unilateral but reciprocal. Not only does the Holy Spirit help us to interpret the fact of Christ in terms which are both credible and true to Christian apprehension. No less important: Christ defines for us the character of the Holy Spirit, enabling us to determine what is truly "of the Spirit" from the multitudinous, varied, and often fantastic "claims" to possession by the Holy Spirit or guidance from the Holy Spirit. As Canon Streeter said: "If Christ is our portrait of the Father, he is no less our portrait of the Holy Ghost. . . . This, if only we will see it, is the spirit manifested in the life of Christ."<sup>7</sup> This had been anticipated by Paul in his classic definition: "The Lord is that Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:17). By the same token, only that which is clearly "of the Lord," that is, fully and undeniably akin to the Spirit of Christ, is truly the Holy Spirit.

## V

"I believe in the Holy Spirit . . . and in God the Father Almighty."

What difference would it make if not simply the words of the creed but Christian thinking regarding God were to follow that order?

<sup>7</sup> Streeter, B. H., ed., *The Spirit*. The Macmillan Company, 1919, p. 371.

It might be contended that that, also, is the *proper* order, since it rightly reflects the chronological sequence in man's apprehension of God. Man's first awareness is not of God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, but rather of the immediate and potent presence of the Divine Spirit here and now.

With all the differences of apprehension and interpretation, Divine Spirit has signified always and in every context *God-near* and *God-at-work*. It has stressed the *intimate presence of God*, and it has stressed the altogether *adequate power of God* available in every situation and for every need.

The Christian understanding of God is always in danger of distortion or perversion from one or more of three sharply contrasted inadequacies:

1. God is thought of as an aloof if not impassive Creator, removed from direct involvement in mankind's struggles in history and inaccessible to each man in his personal trials and needs. This inadequacy springs from an extreme or onesided emphasis upon the *transcendence* of God. It creeps into Christian thought from non-Christian deism. In Christian Faith, it is the heresy of too exclusive attention to *God, the Father Almighty*.

2. God is thought of as impersonal energy or structure, enmeshed within his world but not actively at work upon it and its human inhabitants. This inadequacy results from an exaggerated stress on the *immanence* of God. It creeps into Christian thought from non-Christian pantheism. In Christian faith, it is the heresy of excessive emphasis upon the *Holy Spirit*.

3. God is conceived solely in *personal terms*, in the *image of man*. This inadequacy results from an uncritical insistence upon the *personality of God*. It is analogous to the crude anthropomorphism of primitive religion. In Christian Faith, it sometimes results from exclusive emphasis upon Christ and yields the heresy of *Jesuolatry*.

Against each of these one-sided distortions, a full-orbed Christian Faith provides adequate safeguards:

1. The first heresy, Christian deism, is corrected both by emphasis upon the *Incarnation*—God truly present in the life of Jesus Christ, *and* by recognition of the *Holy Spirit*—God actively at work throughout the whole of his Creation and intimately available to the soul of every man.

The primary value which the Holy Spirit safeguards is the real presence of God in human personality through faith in Christ. If God is really present by the Holy Spirit in human life, then it is the whole Godhead with which we have to do, in all the values of the Divine presence. . . . God as Holy Spirit, therefore, may be conceived as present in all His activities, creative, redemptive, and sanctifying. The Holy Spirit in fact repeats within the human life the whole work of God without the life.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Robinson, H. W., *op. cit.*, p. 238.

2. The second heresy, Christian pantheism—a heresy to which a too exclusive stress upon the Holy Spirit always tempts Christian thought—is decisively corrected by the acceptance of Jesus Christ as veritably God-in-human-flesh, and of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ.

3. But it is with respect to the third heresy—crude *anthropomorphism*—that the Holy Spirit brings unexpected and needed corrective.

Christian theism finds Personal Purpose or Purposeful Personality to be the least inadequate way to conceive God. But even this conception is not altogether adequate or satisfactory. Its inadequacy springs from the inescapable association of the thought of personality or purpose with a specific center of consciousness or will. God tends to be conceived somewhat apart from his Creation rather than present always and altogether throughout his Creation. Not infrequently, this results from thinking of God too exclusively in terms of Christ. The conception of the Holy Spirit enables us to think of that same will and purpose as pervasively present throughout all reality.

## VI

How, then, shall we conceive the relationship of God as Father, as Son, and as Holy Spirit?

It is a relation—not of separation, but of interdependence. All three are affirmations concerning God. Strictly speaking they must properly be thought always *together*, never separately:

*GOD THE FATHER* stresses the ultimacy of the Divine. The certainty of God's existence—his infinity, his eternity, his power—we may know from this vast and mysterious creation in which our lives are set, which speaks to us ever of the Creator and Sustainer of all that is—"God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." Ultimacy affirms the transcendence of God. It reminds us of the mystery, the ineffability, as well as the primacy and finality of Deity. Here we think of God primarily in his relation to the whole of his creation.

*JESUS CHRIST* defines the character of God and of his Holy Spirit. The character of that Being in whom we must believe, we discern in the face of Jesus Christ—his mind, his life, his faith. That mysterious, limitless Power which upholds and governs the universe is not mere undifferentiated Might; it is the life-transforming, life-redeeming energy of the character of Jesus of Nazareth. In and through Christ, we discern the nature of his purposes and the manner of his working for their realization. But that character known in Christ is omnipotent—of immeasurable and wholly adequate resource for every necessity. Jesus Christ speaks of God's re-

deeming work for and upon man. Here, we have in view primarily God's relation to mankind—to each man and to all in the tale of human history.

*THE HOLY SPIRIT* affirms the intimacy of omnipotent Power discerned as to his character in Jesus Christ. The never-failing availability of that Power—his ready accessibility to each of us at every moment—of this the Holy Spirit testifies. But that intimate Presence is not some ghostly, mystifying specter; it is the actual spirit of Jesus of Nazareth, now immediately present and yet the very being of Ultimate Reality. The Holy Spirit declares God's omnipresence. Here, we think especially of God-near and God-at-work, in the souls of those ready and eager to receive Him.

## VII

Finally, then, how shall we think of God?

*THE EXISTENCE OF GOD*, we know through his creation. But, that Power which rules the stars in their courses—that very self-same Power—is, quite literally, closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet—a Presence more accessible and more intimate than our dearest; and that Power is, in his inmost Being, the same goodness and love and loveliness seen so clearly in Jesus of Nazareth—the God and Father of Jesus Christ.

*THE CHARACTER OF GOD*, we discern in the face of Jesus Christ. For "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." But that Character, so clearly, so compellingly, so irresistibly clamant upon our affection and loyalty and trust, that very self-same Character is, quite literally, the Sovereign of creation, the Ruler of the universe, the Ultimate Power which determines all. And that Character, in all his infinite power and infinite grace, is the nearest, dearest Companion of our solicitude and our yearning.

*THE NEVER-FAILING AVAILABILITY OF GOD*—of this, we are made sure in the Holy Spirit. But that Presence—so near, so intimate, ever about us and within us—that very self-same Presence pervades the whole universe, and determines its every atom and motion. And that Presence, often so hauntingly vague and mysterious, is—the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

So, we may declare: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, his Son, our Lord; and in the Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit of Christ, which is the Spirit of God."



*From S. Paul Schilling*

**D**R. VAN DUSEN'S ARTICLE has penetratingly examined the implications of belief in God as Holy Spirit for the Christian understanding of man, Christ, and God. Sharing his central thesis and grateful for the light he has shed, I wish to consider the significance of faith in the Holy Spirit for another major area of Christian doctrine, the Christian life itself. What practical meaning should belief in the Spirit have for the lives of those who profess it?

The question has an urgency today which is too seldom perceived. At the Amsterdam Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Sarah Chakko declared that India is asking two questions of Christians:

In what way has the Christian message recreated society? What difference does the Holy Spirit make in the daily life of a Christian? Until the people of India can see a Church of which they can say: "Behold how these Christians love each other and all men," and until they see in those who bear the name of Christ the new life that is God's gift to us, people will come to God not because of us, but in spite of us.<sup>1</sup>

If we are to fulfill our mission in the world, we must combine clear thinking about the Spirit with dynamic demonstration of the life of the Spirit. If faith in the Holy Spirit makes no difference in life, it is an empty shadow, as dead as the wraith which the term "Holy Ghost" sometimes suggests. It is ghostly, but not holy. Just what difference is made by true faith in the Holy Spirit?

## I

*Faith in the Holy Spirit imparts wholeness to life.* When we know God as the Spirit of Truth, Power, and Love who carries on in human life the redemptive work begun in Christ, and when we remember that he is also the Creator and Sustainer of all existence, we are no longer torn between the competing claims of the natural and the supernatural, science and religion, reason and revelation, the secular and the sacred. Instead, we see all these experiences as complementary aspects of life, informed and transformed by the life of God.

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<sup>1</sup> Visser 't Hooft, W. A., ed., *The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches*. Harper & Brothers, 1949, p. 177.

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There is no doubt valid meaning in the traditional idea of the holy as that which is set apart, especially recognized as sacred, or dedicated distinctively to the service of God. For Christians, as for Isaiah in the temple, the holy God is high and lifted up. Even when he is most intimately known, he remains the sovereign God of the universe whose thoughts are not our thoughts nor his ways our ways. He is not wholly Other, but he is holy and other, mysterious, transcendent, and awe-inspiring. Nevertheless, the connotation of separateness in the early Hebrew conception of holiness needed to be modified in the direction of relatedness and deepened in ethical content. This enrichment has taken place in later Hebrew and Christian thought of God as Spirit.

In this connection, the etymology of our English word "holy" is highly instructive. It is a descendant of the Old English *halig*, the root of which is *hal*, meaning whole. Our modern words "hale," "heal," and "health" spring from the same root. Cognate are the German adjectives *heilig* (holy) and *heil* (whole, healed, well, sound), the verb *heilen* (heal, cure, make well), and the nouns *Heil* (welfare, happiness, salvation) and *Heiland* (Savior); all are descended from *hal*. In a profound sense, therefore, the holy is the whole, and an important function of the Holy Spirit is that of healing rifts, bridging chasms, breaking down barriers, and giving or restoring that wholeness which is true salvation.<sup>2</sup>

To worship a God whose very holiness implies wholeness serves to relate the human spirit harmoniously to both nature and the study of how nature functions. It helps us to feel at home in the universe, reminding us that neither man and his values nor God and his purposes are alien to our physical environment. He who descended with power on the disciples at Pentecost is the same Spirit who moved on the face of the waters and breathed into man the breath of life. The Holy Spirit is the Creator Spirit. His work is seen not only in lives empowered to become his witnesses, but in the ongoing processes of the cosmic order which at every point depend on him. To worship God in the beauty of wholeness as well as of holiness also saves us from a false compartmentalization of the scientific and the religious aspects of life. We are not religious with our emotions and scientific with our intellects, but whole persons in whom true worship and the search for truth complement and enhance each other.

<sup>2</sup> One wonders whether, if the words could be traced back far enough, a comparable relationship might not be discovered between the New Testament Greek adjectives *hágios* (holy, sacred) and *hygiós* (healthy, sound, wholesome).

To know God as Spirit is likewise to transcend the man-made disjunction between the religious and the secular, the sacred and the profane. Viewed as the sphere of the Spirit's operation, the ordinary affairs of men gain a holy meaning. Peter, fresh from his own transforming experience of the Spirit, saw the relation clearly: "What God has cleansed, you must not call common" (Acts 10:15).<sup>3</sup> With equal discernment Paul asks the Corinthians: "Do you not know that you are God's temple, and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16). To Christian understanding a sanctuary is not, as in medieval architecture, a place set apart and barred from the common folk by an iron screen; it is any human heart possessed by the Spirit, and any place or sphere of life sanctified by the divine Presence and made holy by the humble obedience of those who, loving what the Spirit loves, become channels of his grace.

Above the Mersey River at Liverpool, England, stands what remains of St. Nicholas Parish Church, badly damaged by bombs in World War II. Formerly those who entered it had to turn their backs on the marketplace, the harbor, and the wheat ships anchored there, and then found themselves facing the communion table in semidarkness at the far end. After the war, as George MacLeod graphically tells, a prefabricated hut was built on the ruins, but facing the other way. What had been the porch became the sanctuary, and the tall doors became windows which without stained glass afforded an unobstructed view of marketplace and river. Communicants now see the bread of the common meal on the holy table in the same frame of reference as the wheat produced in men's common life. In such a setting worship gives new meaning to work, and work brings deepened reality to worship. He who knows God as Holy Spirit sees all life in just such a setting. Communion with God in worship and responsible sharing in the common life are interpenetrating aspects of one life in the Spirit.

Life in the Spirit imparts also personal wholeness. The Spirit-centered man is not lost in hopeless contradictions or torn by unresolved emotional conflicts. Although he is not removed from the arena of effort and struggle, he is freed from energy-sapping tension and the debilitating inner turmoil of those who try to serve two or more masters. He is all of one piece. His mind is single. He knows the purity of heart which, as Kierkegaard has shown, is to will one thing. Sustained by the divine Spirit, he is in harmony with himself, with his fellows, and with God. In him is fulfilled the promise of which Henry H. Tweedy writes:

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<sup>3</sup> Bible quotations are from the Revised Standard Version.

And earth shall win true holiness,  
Which makes Thy children whole,  
Till, perfected by Thee, we preach  
Creation's glorious goal!

## II

*Because God is Holy Spirit, he may be personally experienced.* The presence or absence of faith in the Spirit makes all the difference between thought about God and first-hand acquaintance with God. When such faith is present, that which is theoretically true of our relation to him is inwardly realized. "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirits that we are children of God," and we can cry in language of deepest intimacy, "Abba! Father!" (Rom. 8:15, 16).

This awareness is of course part of the common heritage of all Christians. It has been particularly vivid, however, in those groups which conceive of the church primarily as "the 'gathered' church, the church of the covenant, the church of the community of the Holy Spirit," or as "the fellowship of the Spirit or the community of the Perfect Way."<sup>4</sup> Though the Amsterdam Assembly declined to list this with the Catholic and classical Protestant views as a third major conception of the church, it is held by multitudes whose religion centers in the Spirit-moved, Spirit-led, and Spirit-possessed life. Such folk remind us that beyond all outward forms, whether of belief, worship, the ministry, or organization, we are called to a personal walk with God, to "holiness of heart and life," and that the Spirit is available to guide us in the way.

Surely there is urgent need today for a renewed emphasis on the availability and strengthening power of God. The fears, anxieties, tensions, mutual suspicions, and frictions of our time are symptoms of a deep-going spiritual emptiness. Such phenomena are doubtless occasioned in part by the scientific and social developments which have destroyed our sense of security. Yet external factors alone cannot account for the *malaise* of modern man. Years ago Peter Taylor Forsyth acutely observed that unless we have within us something that is over us, we succumb to what is around us. Having made man the measure of all things, we have discovered with a rude shock that he is unworthy of so lofty a status. Overwhelmed by the forces which our own ill-guided knowledge has released but which we lack the ethical insight and spiritual power rightly to control, we yield to despair.

<sup>4</sup> The descriptions are respectively those of Douglas Horton at Amsterdam (W. A. Visser 't Hooft, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 58) and Bishop Angus Dun in his *Prospecting for a United Church*, Harper & Brothers, 1948, p. 75.

Our plight convincingly demonstrates the truth of Plato's judgment: "Whenever anyone gives something too big to something too small to carry it, too big sails to too small a ship, too big meals to too small a body, too big powers to too small a soul, the result is bound to be a complete upset."

Yet our very despair may stab us awake. There are unmistakable evidences even now that many are searching for a higher center of devotion and a deeper source of power. Church membership in the United States is increasing at a rate two and a half times that of our growth in population. Significant also is the unprecedented demand for books, fiction and non-fiction, dealing on the deeper levels with profoundly religious themes. Eugene Exman, religious book editor of Harper's, suggests that much of this demand springs from the spiritual hunger of people who still shrink from so public an expression as church attendance but can purchase and read a book without attracting much attention.

This gives rise to a disquieting question. If and as people turn to the churches, what will they find? Frequently, it is to be feared, distraught human beings like themselves who have the form but lack the power of godliness, in whom the awareness of God has grown dim, and for whom prayer has become a lost art. Churches are not unknown where there is a humming program of diversified activity, but little genuine worship or devotion. Too few church members are sustained regularly or even strengthened intermittently by a vivid sense of the divine Presence. As W. Russell Maltby declared, we often profess more than we possess. Many within the church resemble the Ephesians who Paul discovered had "never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit" (Acts 19:2).

Churchmen and nonchurchmen alike need to learn that the Holy Spirit exists. Far more, they need to meet him in their own lives.

And shall we then forever live,  
At this poor dying rate?  
Our love so faint, so cold to Thee,  
And Thine to us so great!

Our plight is as needless as it is sad. The Spirit's infinite love still surrounds us, brooding over us with a compassion akin to that which moved Jesus to weep over Jerusalem, and striving to sweep away the barriers of complacency, self-will, and pride which separate us from him. He can be experienced, personally and directly. Turning to him in trust, we pass from death to life.

The reality of that experience is attested today in increasing numbers

of men and women who, alive to God, are seeking and finding exciting new dimensions in Christian living. In colleges, theological seminaries, and local churches, and among ministers and laymen of various vocations may be found Christian cells meeting regularly for prayer, study, and group action in the spirit of Christ. Centers and movements like Sigtuna in Sweden, Cimade in France, Iona in Scotland, and Kirkridge and Parishfield in the United States; fellowships like the Disciplined Order of Christ; adventurous new churches like the ecumenical Church of the Savior in Washington, D. C.; and intentional communities like Koinonia in Georgia are dedicated to the disciplined practice of the life of the Spirit. Such groups vary considerably, but all seek to bring the wisdom, power, and love of God redemptively to bear in the ordinary associations of men. In them the Holy Spirit is at work today.

### III

*Faith in the Holy Spirit means power to fulfill his will and grow into his likeness.* "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witness" (Acts 1:8). The New Testament writers are clear that possession of the human spirit by the Spirit that was in Christ leads to newness of life, "a new creation" (II Cor. 5:17). Such life, empowered from above, reaches heights quite inaccessible to "the natural man" relying on his own strength. The quality imparted, moreover, is no vague abstraction; New Testament holiness is a deeply ethical holiness realizable in ordinary human relations here and now. "The fruit of the Spirit," writes Paul, "is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22). To these might well be added courage, since those who were filled with the Spirit after the arrest and release of Peter and John "spoke the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31). Those who experienced God as Spirit receive power to reproduce, as far as it can be reproduced by finite men, the kind of holiness they find in him.

Belief in the Holy Spirit should save us from despair concerning the possibilities of human life. Christian thought in the past generation has gained a much needed realism with respect to the depth, extent, and power of sin in man. We are "very far gone from original righteousness" and in desperate need of the saving grace of God. But it is also realism to recognize that grace is available, that man is redeemable, and that by the power of the Spirit we can be delivered from the power of sin. The question is not what man can accomplish by his own unaided efforts, but what his life can become when rooted in the life of God. To stress the bad news of



human sin and divine judgment without at least an equal emphasis on the good news of God's forgiving love and transforming power not only dulls the edge of ethical endeavor but misses the heart of the Christian gospel. The God revealed in Christ and constantly active as Holy Spirit is not only holy in himself, but works to make holy those who open their hearts to his indwelling.

We need today a new and balanced affirmation of the old doctrine of sanctification. The term needs to be saved from both its friends and its foes, from those who claim too much and those who expect too little. Some Christians under the spell of an overemotional interpretation of the Spirit's functioning, have sometimes claimed for themselves or asserted as normative the so-called second blessing, involving the attainment of a finished perfection, a static holiness in which sin is no longer deemed possible. Others have reacted against this flagrant and often arrogant ignoring of the plain facts of experience by denying the possibility of any kind of holiness. Fortunately we are not limited to these alternatives.

We shall be nearer the truth if we think of sanctification as a process rather than a state. Humanly considered, it involves the ever-renewed dedication of the self to God. From the divine side, it means being made holy, made over, or transformed through the activity of the Holy Spirit. In a revealing passage Paul declares that "to us who *are being saved*" the cross is the power of God (I Cor. 1:18). Salvation is viewed by the apostle not as something done once for all, but as an ongoing event; sanctification is greatly enriched in meaning if it is similarly interpreted. It is the process of being sanctified, a becoming holy. It is being freed from the power as well as the guilt of sin, winning victories over temptation through divine strength, growing in obedience to God, being enabled through deepening fellowship with the Holy Spirit to realize his will.

Belief in the Holy Spirit preserves the notion of perfection also from either outright rejection or serious misinterpretation. It seems certain that Jesus called on his followers to seek perfection. "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). Yet just as certainly human beings cannot be expected to equal the perfection of God. The Greek adjective *téleios*, which is translated perfect, means literally complete or finished. It refers to that which has reached its goal or end (*télos*), that which is faultless, lacking in no respect. In the moral realm it denotes that which fulfills all virtue, unblemished excellence of character. To what degree can the term be properly applied to finite men?

We must remember that men are not God. They are creatures, not



"the Creator of the ends of the earth."<sup>5</sup> They are confronted with bodily and spatial limitations which the divine Spirit does not have. They are subject to temporal beginnings and growth from infancy to maturity, as he is not. They have nothing which even remotely approaches his breadth of perspective, his wisdom, or his power. They cannot literally be perfect as he is perfect. But they can be expected to realize their human potentialities as fully as God actualizes those peculiar to him. The standard held up by Jesus is essentially this: "You are to be perfect in your way as God is perfect in his."

Note for example that we are not called to become perfect in everything, but in love. There is no indication in the New Testament writings that men are expected to attain perfection in knowledge, understanding, or might, but we are challenged to seek perfection in love toward God and man.

We may assume the existence in the purpose of God of an ultimate standard of what human life ought to become. The complete fulfillment of this standard is probably impossible in the life of any earthly person. But there is open to every individual in this life a level of approximation to the ideal which accords with his unique personal capacities and his particular social situation. The attainment of this level of approximation would constitute perfection for him.

It must be admitted that this manner of thinking runs the risk of portraying perfection statically, almost quantitatively. This danger can be avoided, however, if we keep clearly in mind the dynamic character of personality, the nature of growth, and our relation to the Holy Spirit. In actual human experience each attainment discloses new demands and further possibilities. For this reason it would be well to substitute for the older concept of perfection as completion the idea of infinite perfectibility. The perfection sought by Christians is not once-for-all achievement, but inexhaustible perfecting. In Pauline terms, it means growing up in every way into him who is our head, even Christ, with the realization that even the mature man continues to grow (Eph. 4:15; Phil. 3:14, 15). Within the context of the eternally valid principles of God there appear for human beings ever new tasks, but also ever deeper resources for fulfilling them. The summons to perfection is therefore a summons to endless spiritual growth. The truly Christian man is always pressing on, supported by divine strength.

<sup>5</sup> Isaiah 40 and Job 38 are classic expressions of the vast contrast in capacity and accomplishment between God and his finite human creatures.

Such is life when lived in fellowship with the Holy Spirit, but only then. The possibility of true holiness roots not in man's up-reaching goodness but in the Spirit's down-reaching and up-lifting love. Christian faith has to do not with a purely human struggle, however valiant, to achieve virtue. It speaks rather of "righteousness and joy and peace in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17). It beckons men to that rich fulfillment which comes when life is possessed by the love and quickened by the power of God.

The practical possibility of such a life we must take seriously if we are not to be recreant to the faith we profess. Like those in Corinth who were "consecrated in Christ Jesus," we too are "called to be saints" (I Cor. 1:2)—not travelers whose journey is over, but wayfarers in the process of becoming what Wesley described as "altogether Christians." What we are called to be we are not now, but may by God's grace become. It is in this humble, hopeful, expectant, and exultant spirit that we are to approach life, because we find the Spirit of God at the heart of it. In this spirit also we are to pray, as we often do in the Collect for Purity, perhaps unaware of what we are asking: "Almighty God, . . . cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy holy Name." In this spirit, indeed, life and prayer are one.

*From Gilbert Kilpack*

## I

A QUAKER IS REPORTED to me as having prepared a younger delegate to the Friends World Conference at Oxford with the admonition: "Now don't expect another Pentecost!" It is a rather fearful consideration that this remark may be typical of the faith in a branch of the Christian church which was founded on the basis of the continuous revelation of the Inward Christ. It is a remark, I fear, which would fit all too easily into the mouths of the majority of Protestant church members. Few are the Christians who would utterly deny the Holy Spirit, yet neither would they affirm its necessity. Its position among us is not unlike that of the retired business executive with his name still on the letterhead and still receiving the honor of a financial remuneration, but no longer counted in when weighty decisions are to be made. Among us the Holy Spirit is honored but not counted on, respected historically but not desired contemporaneously, invoked but not expected, praised but not trusted.

To those who give thought to these considerations it is no news that the people of our churches do not live by the Spirit. They live by an unwritten, shifting code of morality which is a compound of worldly expediency and selected biblical injunctions. But it is news to the church-goer that this church without the Holy Spirit is not the Christian church. It is news to many that to live the life of Jesus is not simply to live by the golden rule or by any code of conduct. I am well aware of the difficulties which here present themselves. The Holy Spirit is not easily imparted; preaching often drives it away and the people are by no means anxious to receive it. Therefore it seems expedient *in the meantime* to permit the people a scale of values, a set of principles, which is certainly better than nothing. But the "better than nothing" rules the day in our churches and so Christianity is by-passed in our time.

St. Paul said, "If any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him." The churches do not really believe this; and the proof that they do not believe it lies in the fact that the people are not taught to long for it, to hope for it, to wait upon it, to bend every effort of their life to be prepared to receive it. The whole issue is frequently dismissed

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with the explanation that "only a few of us are able to have mystical experiences." This will not do, for the plain fact is that Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to all who would receive it.

The fact that the church does not live under the power and direction of the Holy Spirit is exhibited in the fact that it has been unable to stand with undivided will against the evils most devastating to this generation and to display the warm beginnings of the Kingdom in its fellowship. In America a tidal wave of secularism has swept away whatever inward structure existed in the nature of a Christian society. The church has, for the most part, made itself at home with American materialism. Every new technical device is accepted as inevitable and capable of being put to good use; there is no profound scrutiny of the new offerings in respect to their influence on the life of the soul. Plain living and high thinking are no longer necessary, in fact, they may be downright selfish and detrimental to progress. All those who have given themselves to the Holy Spirit possess something of an "instinct" which cries out against all that is contrary to the Spirit.

Evidence that the church does not look to the Holy Spirit for sustenance is to be observed in the desert of cultural sterility which surrounds us. When Protestants want God-intoxicated art they have to go to the Catholic Rouault; when they want church buildings they get the best that money can buy—from the past; if they want music, their technical genius can reproduce Bach with the utmost hi-fidelity, but the sons of Bach have run out and only a Holy Spirit-driven culture can revive the line.

The fact that we do not live by the Holy Spirit is displayed in the fact that the ideal set before our people is not sanctity but integration, peace of mind, and churchmanship. The Holy Spirit does not admit of moderation in all things, it breeds martyrs and prophets among the people. We perish for saints whose fervency of spirit stirs us up to give ourselves to God when common sense tells us it is impossible. Saints are saints by the Holy Spirit and not by logic, not by tradition, not by moral rectitude. The Christian concept of sanctity is bound up entirely in absolute faith in the Holy Spirit and unflinching obedience to its present directive. If there is any attempt to trade off the present leadership of the Holy Ghost for an old tradition or to postpone it to a happier day—Ichabod! sanctity in its strength and contagion is gone. The secular organizer, the law-maker, the political architect goes ahead under his own steam, but the saint without faith in the Holy Spirit is at a full stop.

There are a thousand evidences that our world rolls on without heed-

ing the Holy Spirit, but I am concerned here with the fact that the Spirit is so little to be found in the church, its home on earth. Our great ecumenical conferences may convene and, after considerable spiritual travail, agree that the church's supreme authority, its only unity is that Holy Spirit which proceeds through Jesus Christ and reaches us today with a power no less than that which raised up the first apostles. But we do not live from day to day in the atmosphere of an ecumenical conference and our church congregations are not colonies of heaven. It becomes increasingly difficult to convince the spiritual seeker that the Christian church is led by the Holy Spirit, that the Christian church is Christian.

The Christian church was founded as the church of an inspired people. It was not founded as the church of a moral people, or a reasonable people or an ethically correct people. It was not even founded as the church of inspired individuals, though they were individually inspired, but rather its genius and hope lay in the fact that *they were the church of an inspired people*. They discovered that God had a life and power to give his people when they were gathered and waiting upon him inwardly. Today we point to the inspired individuals among us and take hope, and here and there can be found a few fellowship groups which may be inspired. But it is quite another matter to point to the Presbyterians, the Methodists, the Society of Friends and say, "There is an inspired people." It is the lack of the Holy Spirit which discredits the church—even in the eyes of those who do not claim the Spirit.

Robert Barclay, the Quakers' only systematic theologian, said, "Take away the Spirit and Christianity remains no more Christianity." He did not mean that when the ministers cease to preach about the Holy Spirit the church is no more Christian, nor did he mean when we cease to study or cease to organize or cease to value the old traditions. These violations bring their own hurt, but it is precisely at the moment that Christians cease to know themselves utterly dependent upon the Holy Spirit for direction, power, and glory that they are no more Christians.

What can be gained, it may well be asked, by publishing abroad the opinion or even the fact that the Christian church is no more Christian? Perhaps this brings us to the crux of the issue before us. As long as our security rests in human wisdom or in a verbally inspired text or in an ethical code or in a church organization—as long as our faith rests finally upon any of these, we are not going to launch into the deep waters of life from which the Holy Spirit is able to draw us forth and use us.

Does not all of this imply that we can command the Holy Spirit?

Everyone knows that the Holy Spirit is the gift of God and what is given is not earned. Here we walk the knife edge which brings us near to heresy, but walk it we must, there is no other way. It is not gotten by merit, it is not brought by sacrifice, it is purely out of the goodness of God's grace that we ever receive it; and yet no one who ever repented, yearned, sought, asked, disciplined, pled, sacrificed—no one who has wanted it more than anything else has ever been denied it. They who receive it do not command it, and it seldom comes in the form most expected. "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost;" with these words of Jesus, God bound himself in an extraordinary sense to man's command. It is George Tyrrell who dares to say that through the Holy Ghost, God becomes the slave of man. But, saying this, I hasten to say that I am dead set against the electric-light-switch school of prayer. There is a very real danger in supposing that we just plug in on God, or that we tune in on his wave length as easily as we spin the dial on our radio. He is ever present, but we cannot realize our full measure of his Holy Spirit without the crucifixion of our human spirits; prayer can never escape its partnership with abstinence, waiting, and agony.

The command came to the first Christians to wait in Jerusalem for the gift of the Holy Spirit. This command falls as definitely upon us as upon those who first heard it. One of the great humiliations of Christians in the modern world must be to submit shamelessly to God's way of making haste—it flies in the face of worldly wisdom. There is a whole manner and temper of life connected with the injunction to wait in Jerusalem, and it is this the churches have forgotten or neglected. I run my finger down the alphabet of our virtues in search of those which prepare the way for the Spirit. I find Seasonable, Security, Sensible, and Semaphoric—but where is Silence? I find Sacraments, Service, Solemnity, and Shrewd—but where is Simplicity? I find Social, Solicitous, Solvent, and Systematic—but where are Solitude and Sacrifice?

The Holy Spirit has always been at war with the church, a warfare not unto death but unto submission. As recorded in the New Testament the Holy Spirit was not delivered to the proper authorities, not given to the ancient succession of vested priests in Jerusalem. It was delivered to a band of laymen, an informal fellowship of seekers who risked walking the narrow path which on one side falls off into the vale of fanaticism and rises on the other side into the mists of Gnosticism. We are always in danger of running off into false liberty or losing our breath in the impersonal heights. But these temptations are not new; Jesus faced them and promised that we should be led through them. But the church has not been



willing to run the risk. We have looked upon the pitfalls and built our theologies with them mainly in mind. The result is that we have theologies of caution rather than theologies of sanctity and martyrdom. Let the words of caution be ever at hand and knowledge of the sad heresies of history be in the back of our minds; but we must know that our salvation lies in our steadfast gaze upon him and in our wholehearted response to his Spirit.

At the moment I happen to be reading D. H. Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American Literature*. On almost every page he is telling me that "... it is the Holy Ghost we must live by. The next era is the era of the Holy Ghost. And the Holy Ghost speaks individually inside each individual . . ." No orthodox theologian was ever so unashamed in his constant allusions to the Holy Ghost as this D. H. Lawrence; but as I read on, his perverse definition of the Spirit is so outrageous, so dazzling, that I am driven to the point where I know I must chuck the whole business and retreat into our theology of caution *or* outdistance him with a theology of sanctity.

Lawrence goes on: "Each isolated individual listening in isolation to the Holy Ghost within him . . ." A lie against Church, against the communion of the saints. "The Holy Ghost, who is inside us, and who is many gods. Many gods come and go, some say one thing and some say another and we have to obey the God of the innermost hour. It is the multiplicity of gods within us make up the Holy Ghost." And so he lies against God, denies the Jewish witness of the centuries. "The Holy Ghost doesn't forgive because the Holy Ghost is within you. The Holy Ghost *is* you: your very You." He lies against man and the Holy Ghost, he blurs all distinction and robs both of their integrity.

The Father had his day, and fell.  
The Son has had his day, and fell.  
It is the day of the Holy Ghost.

There we have it. There is no Father, no Son. Only the Holy Ghost and D. H. Lawrence. There is the trap lying in the path before us: deny the Father and the Son, reduce all to the Holy Ghost which is naturally in us and is us. The devil's most subtle device. And yet Lawrence's last words are true! "This is the era of the Holy Spirit!" What greater news can the church teach and preach than this?

Inasmuch as the Holy Spirit is that life of God which is, with eternal newness, at all times pressing in upon us from above, it is impossible to speak definitively of it. St. Paul listed for us the fruits of the Spirit and

by them we test all spirits. But it is also an article of Christian discipline that we formulate for ourselves a catalog of remembrance—the offices of the Holy Spirit, the ways of grace by which God has reached us, served us personally, and also the operations of the Holy Spirit as we read them in the great history of the church.

1. *It is the Holy Spirit which is able to reveal to us our true spiritual identity.* I hold it to be the divine purpose that we are all of us to become true originals. Our second birth, our baptism by the Spirit saves us from the stereotype life of the outward law or the reproduction life which comes of second-hand revelation. To find out who and what we are is the grand purpose of life; it is all stored up, a rich treasure in God and received by us freely through the Holy Spirit. Without this, all personality remains two-dimensional. So long as we seek our true identity apart from the Spirit, there will remain a most unfruitful tension arising out of our continual comparison of our life and vocation with that of others; without the "true original" concept there will always be insipidity, monotony, lack of strength. The world is full of bored and boring souls; God did not make them so, he made them free to accept or reject the supreme gift of individuality in him.

When the Holy Spirit as God's ever new revelation is under consideration, the question is sometimes asked: "Can you point to a brand new truth in all these centuries since Jesus Christ?" We may in answering this have difficulty pointing out a spic-and-span new truth, but we will be on firm Christian ground in holding that the newest revelation is the revealing of new people—a more marvelous thing than any new abstract truth. The revelation of Jesus Christ was not essentially the revealing of a creed or a principle or a body of learning, it was the revelation of a person led freely through this world by direct, inward communion. We shed most light in our day not by our straining to pronounce new principles or truths but as we are new creatures in Christ.

2. *It is the work of the Holy Spirit to show us the evil, enabling us to resist it and to show us the good, enabling us to accomplish it.* And since God looks upon us as individuals this is accomplished in better than wholesale fashion; he truly speaks to our condition. The Beatitudes, the commands, the teachings of Jesus remain to the end for our general instruction and the testing post of our inward guidance. Good and evil are personal as well as universal and we need that direction which focuses the great light of eternity upon the moment, the place, and the person.

3. *The gift of the Holy Spirit is the heart of the Christian understanding of prayer and worship.* It is the grand theme of Paul and Augustine that God's Spirit prays in us, calls us to prayer, makes prayer possible, and intercedes for us when words are not forthcoming. It is this faith in God's prevenience that saves us from the misconception of thinking of the Holy Spirit and prayer as always dependent upon a sensible feeling of them. It is God's grace to grant as he will a human feeling of the Holy Spirit. At times there is no feeling in spite of our most earnest supplication—but the Holy Spirit is never refused, though it may not come in the manner expected, and to have faith in it then may require great strippings of our spiritual pride.

Prayer is first of all God's inward action in us and we pray to him by the same channel, the same grace wherewith he has already prayed in us. The only difference is, as von Hügel loved to point out, that we need him in a way far different from the way that he needs us; we are totally dependent upon him but he is not totally dependent upon us. If we are agreed upon our absolute dependence upon God, it will be evident just why the Quakers in their historic position on prayer have felt that waiting on God is not a negation but is a positive act of self-giving—the pathway to the Holy Spirit.

4. *Without the aid of the Holy Spirit there can be no clear understanding of the Scriptures.* It was the Spirit which gave the Scriptures forth in the beginning and is now able to open them to all who read them in the light of that same Spirit. Without divine aid the Scriptures remain locked and bolted from us, though we know ever so much about them. If we persist without this aid we pervert and destroy. An example of those who have pushed ahead, manipulating the words after their own fashion, would be those who have turned the teachings of Jesus into a set moral code.

Does this mean that we ought never to open the Book unless we *feel* the Spirit upon us? By no means. We must open the Bible particularly when we feel deserted, but always it must be on our knees, always with an open mind and a broken heart, always inwardly turned to the truth which is yet a mystery.

5. *The Holy Spirit is our highest and truest source of creative inspiration and power.* This is but the reverse side and extension of our first point. The discovery of one's spiritual identity and inward vocation leads to creative action which, according to our calling, is as diverse as animal husbandry and the composing of an oratorio. In accord with our measure of human endowment, our imagination becomes divinized and we become

craftsmen of the Incarnation. Without the Holy Spirit all supremely great creative life dries up. The secular critics and psychologists may explain the great artists and works of art as they will, but I cannot account for what I see and love in the paintings of Giotto and Grünewald, the poetry of Donne and Traherne, the music of Bach, and the singing of Marian Anderson apart from the life of the Holy Spirit. I look upon Dostoevsky as the greatest novelist of the modern world and it is no coincidence that he was nurtured and matured in a religious culture which held to the centrality of the Holy Spirit in human experience. When he considered Jesus' temptations in the wilderness he wrote with a fiery inspiration which was none other than that which ministered to Jesus.

Most of us are called to humble, obscure acts of creativity. It makes no difference, the Holy Spirit gives direction and sense to all activity by holding it up in the light of eternity.

6. *The Holy Spirit is the inward ground of strength and unity of the church.* God communicates himself not only to the individual but also to the fellowship. And what he has to say to the fellowship is unique to it and cannot be had by the isolated individual. It is the Holy Spirit which ensnares and captures the seeker and draws him into the gathering, the church which is the life of the Spirit spread out among all who have faith.

The church has from the beginning been the main battleground of the Holy Ghost, for it is the great meeting place of the eternal and the temporal; there each endeavors to subdue the other. Strange things have happened on this vast and awful battle field. As men for their own sport sometimes set naturally amicable beasts to fighting, so they have set Jesus in conflict with his own Spirit. Those who have claimed the day for one or the other have always run off into grievous errors.

Through the historic Jesus we are led to the Holy Spirit and by his life we continue to check the validity of all inward direction. All efforts to retain Jesus but ignore his ever contemporary Holy Spirit, end in latter-day pharisaism. Those who claim the Holy Spirit but ignore or deny Jesus fall into just as great error. They not only rob the incarnational side of our Faith of its greatest heritage, but they are led unwittingly into denying the church as the testing ground of individual inspiration. Peter came to the Holy Spirit through Jesus. Paul came to Jesus through the Holy Spirit. Let the church find room for both these saints in their contest and let us love and cherish their contest, knowing it is not unto death but unto the full truth in God.

# The Holy Spirit and Methodism Today

NELS F. S. FERRÉ

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH is founded on the rock of Christ. In the fullness of time God himself entered history to save mankind. Who he was and what he wanted did not become clear, however, until Pentecost. God came to us, lived for us, died for us, and conquered death for us in Christ. Only in Pentecost did the fact seize the disciples that as Christ he *kept* coming. He who came in Jesus had come again to those in the Upper Room and was waiting to come to all men. The Spirit whom Jesus promised, the Spirit who is the Lord, had come upon those waiting in prayer to be anointed with power from on high. The Christian Church was founded by Christ, but as the fellowship of the Spirit was born on Pentecost. The human Jesus, as he himself said, had to be removed if the eternal Spirit was to be understood and accepted.

The Methodist Church, too, was founded by the Holy Spirit. Like other great leaders who appeared from time to time in history, John Wesley incarnated the divine Spirit. Only because the Holy Spirit again broke through with mighty power was Wesley able to become a major channel for the church's renewal. Those are blind to spiritual truth who cannot see in the birth of The Methodist Church one of history's main gifts of grace for the effectual working of the Spirit. Those lack Christian motivation who do not rejoice in the Methodist heritage and thank God for his work in it. Our question is, however, what the Holy Spirit can do for the Methodists today.

As a Congregational minister who is also an affiliate member of The Methodist Church and now addressing this Methodist Convocation—I want to look upon that church in the perspective of my understanding of the Holy Spirit. What I have to say, as far as I can, will thus really be a confrontation with God's present living will for the church and the world as a whole. Perhaps for the sake of making this analysis I may be allowed to identify myself with both Methodists and Christians!

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## I

The Holy Spirit, in the first place, must make us Methodists a people of God. God alone can save the world. God alone can now give us the new age which the world must have or perish. God alone can turn the tide of history. In order for him to do so, the Spirit needs to raise up a people of God. God never forces history. He heals it and helps it by his Spirit through the presence in it of his people. The Holy Spirit yearns to make us a people of God.

A people of God must become such by being born again. We must be born from above. As we are, we cannot even see the Kingdom of God. We are turned from God. We look for our own good, not knowing that it leads to destruction. God must turn us and we shall be turned. We must cog into the life of God at a new level. We have used his patience for our ends. He must use our impatience with ourselves for his purposes.

The Methodist Church was born with the experience of the grace of God in the life of John Wesley. He came to see that man's efforts never work to full advantage apart from the grace of God. He learned that spiritual power came through God's pardon. God works in many ways. We must not limit the many channels of prevenient grace. But saving grace comes only when without reservation we are willing to be forgiven, to be turned right, and to live within the power of the Holy Spirit. John Wesley practically equated saving grace with the presence of the Holy Spirit. His was no conception of grace as some impersonal gift, some infusion of merit. Grace is the characteristic relation of the people of God, namely, the personal presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer and in the fellowship of the forgiven. Those who are born again are not their own, live not for themselves, and cannot be sucked into the despair and futility of this world. They are a people of God, manifesting the power of God.

The people of God are a people of *prayer*. Jesus prayed, and saw the Devil fall like lightning. Those waiting for his return prayed, and he came upon them with tongues of fire, turning the multitudes to God. Paul prayed without ceasing, and the Spirit led him to triumph from land to land. The early church prayed, and the Word grew and multiplied. Wherever there has been genuine prayer, faithfully expectant, there has been power on the part of the people of God.

We, too, must become a people of *God's power* by learning how to pray. We are not pantheists. We do not believe that God is equally



present everywhere and under all circumstances. He becomes personally present, as he is, only through the presence of the Holy Spirit. Although what needs now to be done can be done only by God, he needs us for his messengers; he commissions us to shout forth the glad news of his new age. As the Holy Spirit he cannot find room in history except we bid him come. To bid him come we must pray. We must pray aright. Pagan prayers cannot help us. Full trust in his full grace alone works. Such trust we cannot have unless we let the Holy Spirit fulfill our partial attempts at full dedication. Only as we are baptized by the Holy Spirit can our hesitant invitation become the open welcome. Prayer alone can let the Presence make us whole. Prayer alone can help us to accept the full will of God for us and the world. Prayer alone can give us light to see our sins and love to heal our lives. Prayer alone can make us a people of God. As the Holy Spirit takes charge of our lives and of our church, we become a people of God. Christ is in our midst as the Spirit only when we learn patiently and expectantly to pray.

The people of God are also a *sanctified* people. Methodism was mothered on this gospel. Sanctification is meat, not milk. To lose nerve at this point is to lose the height of grace. The Holy Spirit uses only a holy people. God can save the world only through a sanctified church. To be sanctified means to be humble. Holiness is not for us to take or to make. Holiness is God's gift of grace. It is given only to those who repent of their own self-righteousness. Complete repentance is the only way to holiness. The forgiven judge not. The unforgiven project their own sense of guilt on others. The forgiven are humble and understanding. The unforgiven are aggressive and censorious. By this shall all men know that we are a people of God if, being forgiven, we love one another and all men enough to be completely for them, understanding and forgiving them, even as we ourselves are being forgiven and have nothing to boast of before God or men.

Sanctification involves more than forgiveness. It requires that we be a *clean* people. Only the pure in heart see God. Those who see God are a people who are clean unto the Lord. They are pruned trees which bear much fruit. They bear the fruit of the Spirit. The great divorce in what is commonly called Christian is between grace and discipline. Faith falters without discipleship. Freedom is self-indulgence unless the love of Christ controls us. To be sure, good morals will not save us. We are aware that "being good" may block off God's grace. Trust in manners may substitute respectability for righteousness. Pride in holy habits may make

us Pharisees. But, all the same, genuine love disciplines life. The law of love is liberty because it is control from within. The law of the Spirit combines joy and peace with holy living, for the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus sets us free both from desire within and from unholy living without. When the Holy Spirit makes us Methodists a people of God we shall live with joy the clean life. Those who know the reign of the Spirit know the freedom of holiness. They know holy happiness.

Christian sanctification makes us a *concerned* people. No false humility keeps us from doing the good deeds that God may be glorified. We are clean for a community of concern. We are pruned to bear much fruit. Sanctification neither inhibits nor exhibits, but sets us free from sin in order to share God's creative love for the world. We sanctify ourselves that men may come to know and to love God. All things become clean and to be used with prayer and thanksgiving when they are from God for his creatures. What we are and have become is God's to be used. We live no longer for ourselves but for him who died for us and for them for whom he still dies to sin in us. Words come easy, especially to those of us who are paid to say them. None of us, however, can *live* concretely and constantly the sanctified life unless the Holy Spirit live in him. By grace are we saved. By grace are we sanctified. Therefore in order not to frustrate the grace of God we let ourselves be used by him. We wed grace to discipline. We fulfill faith in discipleship. With fear and trembling in ourselves, but with joy and peace in the Holy Spirit, we Methodists are determined once again to let the Holy Spirit make us a people of God.

## II

The Holy Spirit must also make us Methodists Christians. That is hard. We mean to be Christians. We mean it sincerely. But the difference between being a Methodist and a Christian, could we but see it, is startling. To be a Christian means to put Christ first. It means to be ruled by the Holy Spirit. It means to belong, heart, soul, and body to a universal community. It means to have no ultimate allegiance except to God and his Kingdom. It means to be transformed by his love into persons within a community without barriers, without any over-againstness. To be a Christian is to be for all people and completely with all Christian people for the whole world.

Very subtly, to be sure, this picture is changed in the case of most of us Methodists. We certainly do profess to be Christians and to be wholehearted members of the Christian community. In our subconscious,

however, we worship a Methodist God. In practice our allegiance is to the Methodist cause. Not that we believe that we alone shall be saved. We are beyond that narrowness! Not that we will not co-operate, either on the local or the world-wide level. Generally speaking we are one of the most co-operative denominations, even when it comes to footing the bill for ecumenical work. Most of this work in most of us, nonetheless, reaches out to other denominations from our own center. Out of fear we reach for a united Protestantism and out of wisdom we stretch out toward conciliar co-operation. The concrete center of our loyalty, however, is Methodism. Many of our leaders, let us be thankful, are fired by the Holy Spirit to go beyond religious lines into the circle of the Christ-called. All the same, rank and file we have a Methodist altar, ordain to the Methodist ministry, and pledge the loyalty of our new members to the Methodist modes of worship. The God we actually worship the most in our subconscious is a Methodist God. The people we love the most are the Methodist people.

When the Holy Spirit makes us Methodists Christians, however, we shall find a new center of loyalty. We shall still support our actual denomination lovingly, but as a sect dying to Christ. We shall love our church faithfully, but as a church in transition. The center of our affection shall be in Christ, and through the Holy Spirit, within the whole Christian fellowship for the whole world unto the end of the age. Our background can enrich the church as a whole. Our stress on personal experience is a prime need of the church to come. Our loving to be a holy people unto the Lord will be contagious throughout the whole Christian circle. Perhaps God's need for variety will continue some such line as ours as an order well pleasing unto him. God's love will find a way for every genuine need. But now we must know ourselves a people under judgment except as we repent and put first God's great Church.

Ah! but it is not real! How can we be loyal to an abstraction? The Holy Spirit is no abstraction! The Cross of Christ is no abstraction! The sacred body of Christ is no abstraction! In the Holy Spirit we shall be loyal to the whole body of Christ. In the Holy Spirit we shall live to build up that body in love. Our every local loyalty will then blow richly and naturally into universal concern and our universal Christ will be present to enrich, to enlarge, and to intensify every local loyalty. Yes, the Holy Spirit must make us Methodists Christians.

The only basis for oneness in Christ is the Holy Spirit. The only standard for the Christian body made whole is the Holy Spirit. We talk glibly of church union. We glory in being ecumenical. I have even heard

some say that The Methodist Church is ecumenical because it is world-wide. We are thus willing to justify our narrowness rather than to be justified by God. Ecumenical means "the whole world," some say, and Methodism is a world-wide church! But not as wide as God's world, nor as inclusive as the Holy Spirit! Therefore we are not ecumenical in the Christian sense of the word. No smaller measure can be Christian than the heart of Christ. No standard can be Christian that falls short of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. He alone is the proper basis for the reunion of the scattered brotherhood. He alone is the standard for the getting together of the separated brethren. He alone is the power in whom becoming together is real; being together is profitable; and staying together is possible. To be together must mean nothing less than to belong together with the differentiated unity of the Spirit.

Some critical person may think that now we have loosed the wind and will reap the whirlwind. The Spirit has no structure, they say. We need form. We need something definite. The Bible we can follow. The institution we can obey. But where is the Spirit? He is a vague term. Stress on him will make us individualists. Emphasis on the Spirit makes many crackpots. This they say because they know not what they do. The Spirit is love. Whatever builds up the body in love is good. No individualist knows the Spirit. No groupist lives in his power. The Spirit breaks down all barriers, as we let him, turning differences into the many-colored wisdom of God as he purposed it in the church. To be individualistic, dogmatic, separatist is not to know or else to sin against the Spirit. The Holy Spirit alone can unite us, different as we are and different as may be our backgrounds, within the love of Christ which passes knowledge because it is itself the very fullness of God.

Others will say that stress on the Holy Spirit makes us lazy. If he does what we should, do we not become irresponsible? The answer is simple. The Spirit awakens us to newness of life in which we are controlled by the love of God. That love gives us new hearts and new eyes. Our lives lose their weariness, indifference, and flabbiness. They become alert with concern. The Holy Spirit never does what we should, but gives us the love and the power to rejoice in doing what we should. Love is not attitude without action. The Spirit never gives intention without the will and the power to implement our concern. He stirs up responsibility, but not as a burden to discourage us. He gives initiative as the joyous opportunity to work, give, suffer, and win with God.

Today the weary world needs a united church to achieve a united

world. The church of the Spirit is always united and uniting. When we Methodists become Christians we shall be able to face the modern world, not with defiance or with apology, but with the strength of the rock and the freedom of the wind. The rock is the faithfulness of God as he came and comes in Christ; the wind is the Spirit who cannot be tamed but finds his way to those who call upon him. We want structure within our control. We want form to fit our understanding. When the Spirit moves in with triumph he gives form to life and community; he gives structure to thought and civilization; but he gives such steadiness within the irrepressible riches of his abounding grace. His grace enriches life and the church through and beyond structure and form. He is our basis, our standard, and our power for oneness in Christ. What can happen, by God's grace, beyond imagination, if Methodists dare to become Christians?

### III

With no less importance the Holy Spirit must make Methodists *evangelical*. To be evangelical is to be a people of God with a passion for Christ for all people. To be evangelical is to be natural Christians. When Methodists become Christians they will become warmly evangelical. They will be a people of the gospel. They will be Christians with the gospel. When the Holy Spirit takes charge, joy and peace always overflow into irrepressible witness to what God has done and does in Christ. When the Holy Spirit fills our lives we shall fill the whole world with the gospel. Peter Forsyth said pointedly that Christianity spreads to all souls because it pierces the whole soul. The gospel punctures the heart to fill it with an irresistible longing to have it proclaimed to all people.

The Holy Spirit must make us Methodists evangelical, a people primarily concerned with the gospel for a world in need of it. The Holy Spirit must make us Methodists overflow with glad love to a loveless world. As pilgrims we face heaven and home. Most people know no Christian heaven for a home. They have settled down to live here. But as settlers they are poachers soon to be evicted. As pilgrims the land is ours to be used and enjoyed with thanksgiving. They fear growing old and dying, for they see their lease run out. We have our hearts in heaven and rejoice to see the end of our journey. The trip is good, but the destination is better. Therefore we invite all who fear to come with us home where fears end. Therefore we ask all who are confused as to what the shortness of the lease means to see the better place to live. Therefore we tell those who refuse to accept the end of the journey and who will not



abide by the law of the land that if they will only change their minds they can change their lot. For us to live is to tell of God's plan for the future. It is to show others what life is all about and how it can become deeply satisfying within the will of God. It is to share our secret of how to make life become meaningful and how to find ever fuller meaning.

In the love of Christ, God has shown the meaning of life. To live is to share God's love in the community of the Spirit. God shares it with us and we with others. The light shines to us as we let it shine through us. As we let ourselves forgive we are forgiven. As we reach out to others we are ourselves reached by God's grace. Salvation is a weak word, because our main concern is not with safety. Salvation may be a selfish word, as above all else we seek our own security. Evangelism is not mostly concerned with salvation, personal or social. Salvation comes by itself when we open up to the rich grace of God in Christ. To flee the fires of God's wrath against sin is man's minimum wisdom. To hasten toward the eternal riches of God's creative grace is man's maximum wisdom.

To be sure, those whose first and last desire is to stay here in order to enjoy life in their own feeble and foolish ways, we must most certainly tell that, for the sake of their own true good, God's way cannot be crossed without severe penalty. For those who do, future life comes to grief. To get them to want to change their ways, however, we must show them the truer life and the deeper satisfaction. Christ means concern for their welfare activated within us by the Holy Spirit. Those who live in the Holy Spirit and he in them cannot forbear to tell those who do not know and do not love him how truly happy their lives can be *now* if they accept him and how all fears for the future can *now* be exchanged for exultant anticipation. Nor is evangelism in the Holy Spirit a matter of mere words. It is a kind of life in his community which merely uses words to communicate the joy of the Evangel.

When the Holy Spirit makes us Methodists evangelical we become truly *educational*. To educate means to feed. Some think that it may mean to lead out. We need, of course, to be led out of our immature into our mature self or out of our sinful into our saintly self. But very likely the word "educate" means to feed. Too much evangelism is mostly pleading. Too little evangelism is intellectual and moral feeding. Those who are filled with the concern of the gospel will learn how to feed the people of God on the bread of life. To grow strong in grace we need expert spiritual feeding. Too much education has lacked the perspective and the power of the gospel. Too much evangelism has lacked the wisdom and the winsome-



ness of education. Jesus came to preach and to teach. He promised that God would send the Spirit of truth to lead the disciples into all truth.

When the Holy Spirit makes us Methodists evangelical this divorce between evangelism and education will end. Then education and evangelism will become, not rivals, but partners. Education needs to broaden and to enrich evangelism while evangelism needs to direct and to motivate education. The church and the school belong together within the wisdom of the Holy Spirit and in the service of the whole community. All truth is seen surely within the love of Christ. The love of Christ, however, needs to be broken continually into all the truths that feed men's minds and sustain their lives. Love and truth are one in God. When the Holy Spirit makes us Methodists evangelical we shall know how to educate by prayer and love and how to evangelize by truth and thought.

When God makes us Methodists evangelical we shall preach and practice the true *social gospel*. The whole world belongs to God. He made it. He sustains it. He uses it to save us all. He reigns in ultimate power as the world's Savior. He reigns in proximate power as the world's Guide. All the world's resources are his. Their use he leaves to our responsibility. To fail of responsible participation in the social, economic, and political order is therefore to fail God. Christ as God's inclusive love, for instance, is relevant to international relations. We Methodists, when we become evangelical, have a gospel for the social order: God wants and is ready to give us a whole new order. The Age of the Spirit is coming and ready to break out with power.

The Kingdom, to be sure, does not consist in social, economic, political, or international relations. The Kingdom is God's reign in grace. It is the community of Christ's love. It is the fellowship of the Spirit. It is spiritual in nature, not of this world. Nevertheless, when it first came, it began to prepare all other orders of human togetherness. When it is come with full power, all other ways of living together will be fulfilled within it and in accordance with its nature. We have tough, hard work to do with a joyful, zealous, steadfast spirit. To pray, "Thy kingdom come," is also to work with might and main for the coming of all the conditions that pertain to the fullness of the time of the Spirit.

Some are afraid that the Methodists (and other churches) have a "pink fringe." When Methodists become jubilantly evangelical their heart and center will not be pink but blood-red, and that blood will flow to cover all circles of Methodist responsibility. These days call for creative daring in social relations. They call for setting the world right-side-up.

They call for more than merely matching our physical progress. They demand that we do more than offset scientific dangers. These days call for freedom to think radically, to speak radically, to work radically, to go to the root of our troubles with the daring wisdom of Christian love and tender caution of Christian concern.

No evangelism to the masses will work today which seeks mostly escape. No evangelism can be wholesome that speaks in spiritual terms alone. Today the whole man needs to be saved and creatively fulfilled—his physical uses, his social relations, his spiritual states. Today no missionary activity dare hold up its head that lacks concern for the oppressed of the earth. No missionary program can win the world that dares not offer the world God's whole message, the total revolution of life and all its uses in line with God's care for the common and inclusive good. Away then with our fears! Thank God for Methodists who know that the Word of God is not bound in any area of life. Emulate them and leave them behind, even while urging them to pass us again. When we Methodists become evangelical we shall have a social gospel that shall make entrenched evil tremble, rationalized selfishness seethe, organized greed rail; but shall make the peoples of the earth rise up to call us blessed.

But political power is not enough; social pressures fail. Only as the Holy Spirit speaks his language to the oppressed and the oppressors, to those caught in having and to those caught in not having; to those weary with power and to those suffering under its heel; only then shall they all find wisdom to hear and power to do what pertains to our social and political peace. True democracy, in sustained practice, comes only within the gift of the Spirit. It comes not by class conflict. It comes not by mere education. It comes not by what men call moral and spiritual motivation. It comes only by the power of the Spirit, by what God does to make us equal within the abundance of his mercy, the inclusiveness of his responsibility, and the completeness of his judgment and reward. Only as we become a Community in God can we become a true Community of men. Forgetting this, we fail. Accepting this, God gives us the Kingdom, the reign of peace where Love is Lord.

The Holy Spirit is the hope for Methodism of today. Without him we can do nothing needfully new. The world faces either a new creative age, rich with the harmony of the Spirit, or days dark with destruction. The Age of the Spirit is ours for the believing. Believing comes from receiving. We receive only as we believe and as we give. Ours is the choice: the Age of the Spirit, or the age of death; the age of creative faith, or the

age of destructive dread. The Holy Spirit is not neutral. He is all for us and for us all. Let us then be for and with him for all. Let us let the Holy Spirit make us Methodists a people of God; let us let him make us Christians; let us let him make us evangelical.

Come, Spirit, come, until we are all wholly thine; joyfully, gratefully, and effectively in thy service. Come, Spirit, come, for as surely as God is God we await new heavens and a new earth where according to his promise dwells righteousness. Come, Spirit, come, for where thou dost reign mankind finds its truest satisfaction, even in the community of thy concern and in the partaking of thy presence and of thy power. Come, Spirit, come, our abiding joy and our true home.

# Science and Conscience

MICHAEL POLANYI

## I

IT IS SAID that there is a conflict between science and religion and that this conflict threatens to disrupt our civilization. I largely share this opinion, even though I would not like to put the matter in these terms.

Science conflicts with religion since it deals only with natural phenomena, and therefore any comprehensive conception of the universe based on science must exclude the supernatural, which is of the very essence of religion. And, again, science relies on objective observations while religion strives for mystic communion; the contrast is clear, and should be frankly acknowledged. Yet I think it is important to realize at the same time that the weakening of religious beliefs was not due in the first place to the rise of science. The mechanistic world view which leaves no room for the intervention of Providence was first expounded by Greek philosophers before the time of Socrates, in an age when natural science had hardly been thought of. Similarly, in modern times, the weakening of Christian beliefs occurred and got well under way long before the rise of modern science. The Renaissance which emancipated the outlook of men from the guidance of the Church had deeply undermined its authority by the turn of the fifteenth century.

Machiavelli, writing at that time, speaks of the moral disintegration of the Church and the evanescence of religious beliefs as established facts and predicts the downfall of papal authority. Indeed, the Church was saved only at the price of undergoing a split. It was the battle between the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation that renewed Christian fervor and once more restored its mastery over men's thoughts. Yet even this great revival of religion could not kill the germs of the new rationalism. The writings of Montaigne (1590) were soon to show that disbelief in the supernatural continued to grow in the modern mind. This had little to do

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with science: it occurred before Galileo and Kepler, before Harvey, and long before Newton.

Greek philosophers quoted by Plato had taught already that man was a machine made of bones, joints, muscles, and sinews which was set in motion by physical impulses, such as the impact of sounds on the ear. And the mechanistic conception of man was still developing exactly on these lines when French antireligious Enlightenment reached its climax by the middle of the eighteenth century. Thus when a writer like Lamettrie declared that the soul was a secretion of the brain, just as the bile was a secretion of the liver, he owed little to any new discoveries of physiology.

It is true that Newton's work added a tremendous impetus to irreligious and mechanistic philosophies, but by that time naturalism had already gained firm ground which was rapidly expanding to a comprehensive philosophy, claiming the supremacy of reason over revelation.

I conclude therefore that religion was not impaired primarily by science but by a naturalistic or mechanistic world outlook which was rooted in the speculations of Greek philosophers. These speculations have adopted a variety of different principles as their guide and I shall not try to discriminate between these in this brief survey. These differences do not matter, for all these emancipated ideas had one relevant principle in common which unites them in their opposition to any revealed religion: namely, the claim to accept only such beliefs as are founded on reason and experience. They all seek to eliminate error by the vigilant searchlight of doubt. They are all passionately hostile to uncritically held beliefs, which they regard as sources of superstition and fanaticism. For an eloquent statement of this critical attitude we may quote this passage from Mill's work, *On Liberty*:

The beliefs which we have most warrant for have no safeguard to rest on, but a standing invitation to the whole world to prove them unfounded. If the challenge is not accepted, or is accepted and the attempt fails, we are far enough from certainty still; but we have done the best that the existing state of human reason admits of; we have neglected nothing that could give the truth a chance of reaching us; if the lists are open, we may hope that if there be a better truth, it will be found when the human mind is capable of receiving it; and in the mean time we may rely on having attained such approach to truth as is possible in our own day. This is the amount of certainty attainable by a fallible being, and this the sole way of attaining it.<sup>1</sup>

Science is not mentioned in this text, nor is there any reference to it in the rest of Mill's essay. Science formed a support, and a great support, for this critical method merely by the fact that it was held to be the outcome

<sup>1</sup> Mill, J. S., *On Liberty*. Boston, Ticknor & Fields, 1863, pp. 43-4.

of the method and its supreme justification. The precise extent to which this is true is not material here. It does not affect the conclusion which inevitably springs from this analysis; namely, that even though all the knowledge that science has accumulated during the past three hundred years fell into oblivion today, we could not find our way back to revealed religion unless we went back also on the whole critical movement and decided once more to embrace some beliefs uncritically, as an act of faith.

## II

The modern critical movement differed from that of antiquity by the fact that the religion which it assailed and succeeded in disestablishing was not that of the Homeric Gods but the religion of Christ. Christianity is a religion of moral passions. Its universe is but a stage set for the drama of man's fall and his redemption through Christ. Christian faith commands man to see himself as a miserable sinner and to repent so that the hope of God's mercy may visit and sustain him. Christianity quickened man's conscience to an unprecedented intensity and made his enhanced moral passion overflow into a mystic embrace of the cross, of his fellow men, and of the whole creation.

The modern critical movement destroyed the communion between the Christian conscience and the person of Christ, and in so doing it pent up a vast accumulation of unsatisfied moral desire. Barred from their opening toward eternity, the hopes and passions of Christianity overflowed into the secular world, transforming themselves into a belief in historic progress and generating unlimited demands for political and social reform. The philosophers of the Enlightenment replaced the doctrine of original sin by that of original virtue. They believed that man's pristine goodness could be released by the vindication of political freedom. They taught that perfection was within reach of all without the aid of God's grace. To achieve this it was only necessary to establish a just and enlightened government.

Here we have the second great force which has shaped the modern world. It is a thirst for righteousness and a demand for its immediate satisfaction in the affairs of men, which has no parallel in the previous history of mankind. For good and for evil our spiritual and social destinies have been shaped during the past two centuries by a combination of the critical movement with this great outburst of humanitarian passions.

I shall eventually show how the incongruous combination of these two has produced that peculiar monster of our time, a merciless fanaticism armored by steel-hard skepticism. But let me first recognize fully, and



with true gratitude and respect, that the modern humanitarian movement has improved during these past two centuries almost every human relationship. Numberless cruelties which were commonly practiced before were brought to an end. The French Revolution abolished the terrible punishment of the wheel. The emancipation of slavery in the British Empire which occurred about the same time was followed by the abolition of cruel floggings in the navy and army, by a wholesale reduction of the crimes punishable by death, by a reform of prisons and lunatic asylums, by the protection of children and women against inhuman conditions of labor, by the abolition of imprisonment for debt. Cruelty in schools, cruelty in homes, cruelty to animals were all combated with equal zeal. Not a day passed that did not see a thousand efforts made to sweeten life between men, women, children of every class and condition.

This immense advance was achieved by applying humane aspirations to several separate fields within an otherwise accepted state of society. But the effect of the new humanitarian passions was very different wherever the attempt was made to improve society comprehensively at one stroke. Take the rule of the Jacobins. Having achieved power for the establishment of universal virtue, they naturally regarded themselves as entitled to an unlimited exercise of their power. They believed that all evil and misery could be eliminated by protecting the nation against abuses of power. Conscious of being free from any such taint and bent only on the common good, they could not but regard opposition to their own rule as a malicious attack on the liberty and happiness of the nation, which it was their duty to suppress by every means at their disposal. Indeed, no regime aiming at a comprehensive renewal of society can grant justification to an opposition rooted in this very society which it is its purpose to abolish.

We are familiar today with this reasoning. We know that any program of total revolution logically justifies the exercise of unlimited and ruthless power over all those whose supreme good it strives to achieve. Professor Talmon has recently shown how this logic first manifesting itself during the brief rule of the Jacobins was given a more advanced formulation by the abortive conspiracy of Gracchus Babeuf which aimed at the overthrow of the Directory and its replacement by a regime of economic equality. But today this process of thought has gained immensely in convincing power by basing its totalitarian program on alleged scientific grounds.

We shall move a step nearer to the contemporary scene by observing how the critical movement became transformed in recent days into an appeal to science as a guide to human affairs.

## III

It is easy to find reasons for the occurrence of any particular historic change at the time when it did occur, but just because that is so easy it remains uncertain whether other reasons could not be suggested with equal justice. It is best therefore, whenever possible, to start from our present position and try to discover the causes which brought it about by examining why the changed conditions continue to prevail among us today.

If I tell you today that the transformation of matter into radiation has been proved by science, and you do believe me that this is a scientific observation, there is nothing left to you but to accept this to be true. The fact that a moment earlier you would have thought such a transformation inconceivable does not make you hesitate for a moment. It only increases your admiration for science which has uncovered such a miraculous process.

Compare with this the authority of religion today. When Christian churches teach the sacramental transformation of bread and wine into the body of Christ, this is clearly regarded as a dogma and not a statement of fact. As such it does not command conviction beyond the circle of orthodox followers and even an Anglican bishop may demur to it in the name of science. In medieval times you could shatter an opinion on the grounds that it was contrary to religion, but today you can do so by showing that it is contrary to science. The reason is obviously that the authority of religion has been impaired by the principle of doubt, while that of science has been further increased by it.

The shadow of doubt under which religion has passed since the Enlightenment has lately expanded also over the realm of philosophy. When the modern positivist says of a statement that it is metaphysical, he means that it is nonsense. For the past fifty years it has been hammered into us with ever-increasing vigor that science is concerned only with verifiable statements and must be purified of all other elements, which are mere metaphysics. The Viennese school of philosophy has generalized this principle into a universal critique of human utterances. It points out, for example, that if you say that it is wrong to bear false witness, you find that you have made a statement which cannot be proved by the facts. No chemical analysis or microscopic examination can prove that a man who bears false witness is immoral. Hence to call him immoral is either meaningless or no more than an exclamation of disgust, such as one may utter when biting at a worm inside an apple. In the last ten years or so a mild and fumbling reaction has set in against this extreme formulation, in the

course of which it was observed that a moral judgment does possess some imperative power and also a capacity for inducing uneasiness in a person condemned by it; that it is not just a groan but also something like the act of shooing away a cat from the milk pot.

It remains unexplained on these grounds why anyone should use such abstract terms as "immoral," "insincere," "corrupt," etc., to frighten away people from certain actions, or why anyone should worry if disparaged in such allegedly meaningless terms. If these are no more than a manner of shouting "boo!" they can only be quite ineffectual, as they release no great volume of voice and have no terrifying sound in the ear.

But I am not concerned here with criticizing the positivist movement. My purpose is merely to remind you of the way positivism has elevated, or tried to elevate, science to the supreme control of all human thought. It regards science as the ideal toward which we should strive in every mental activity, with the possible exception of the works of art.

For example, if you say of a historian that his work is truly scientific, this will usually be accepted as a relevant term of praise. The historian is likely therefore to strive to be scientific. If you say that an educator's method is unscientific he will unhesitatingly regard this as a disparagement and will therefore likewise strive to be scientific. Some students of man will stop at nothing in their desperate endeavor to appear scientific. Some psychologists have turned away from the study of consciousness in order to become truly scientific. Economists are incessantly worried by doubts whether economics is really a science. The usual consolation in such heart-searchings is to concede that one's study—be it economics or psychology, history, politics, or beer-brewing—is still a young science. It is implied that when it gets older it will become a fully fledged science in the manner of physics, which is acknowledged as the only quite exact science, a science that is strictly verifiable.

It seems to me that of all meaningless phrases now in circulation, this self-deprecation of virtually all human thought as a mere pilgrimage toward scientific perfection is most transparently the emptiest. But unfortunately, it does not sound so silly at all; and this is the really disturbing thing, for it reveals how desperately difficult it is to think in other terms than these today.

The craving for a scientific sanction of all our thoughts has transformed the very idiom of our thinking. We no longer dare to express even the most obvious human truths without dressing them up in scientific robes. Take modern education. Everybody knows that it is the parents' duty to

provide their children with a peaceful and loving home. But if you want to say so you must invoke the discoveries of psychology which have taught us that children need a sense of security. Earlier generations founded a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Today if you want to induce parents to treat their children more humanely you have to appeal to psychology, which says that the child must be allowed an outlet for his aggressiveness. To which you may add some scientific fairy tales such as that the cruelty of Russian Bolshevism arose as a reaction to the harsh practice of swaddling Russian babies with their arms tied down to their bodies.

There is a great volume of contemporary writings by psychologists and social anthropologists, who analyze human affairs within the framework of observational terms which avoid any mention of good and evil. A good deal of fascinating and often humanly instructive information has been gained by this method, but there is inherent in it also the danger of either discrediting moral judgment or of replacing it in the way I have described before by an irrelevant scientific sanction.

These two aspects of this mode of thought, which is rapidly gaining ground today in the discussion of human problems, are usually combined in the following ambiguous usage. At one moment the anthropologist says that any distinction between right and wrong is sheer "ethnocentrism" unworthy of the detached scientist, and at the next moment he uses his morally neutral scientific terms to condemn the evils of our society.

The first attitude will usually prevail in the study of primitive societies for whose conditions the anthropologist does not feel responsible. Thus a distinguished anthropologist will describe the most brutish practices, such as the unspeakably cruel murder of supposed witches, as a cultural achievement.

Some social systems (we read) are much more efficient than others in directing aggression into oblique or socially nondisruptive channels. There is no doubt that witchcraft is Navaho culture's principal answer to the problem that every society faces: How to satisfy hate and still keep the core of society solid.<sup>2</sup>

Supposing it were true, which is actually no more than an arbitrary speculation, that practices like witch-burning, head-hunting, or human sacrifices help to stabilize the primitive societies in which they are customary; it would still be monstrous to suggest that this is the solution of their social problem. Social stability is not social perfection, and the stability of evil is the worst of evils. These primitive people are not beasts but men like

<sup>2</sup> C. Kluckhohn and D. Leighton, *The Navaho*. Harvard University Press, 1946, p. 177.

ourselves. Some of them are gentler and more loving to each other than we are; if others are corrupted by superstitious hatreds or debased by habits of greed and treachery, there is sure to live in them also a revolt against these conditions. Ancient mythology tells of the long-drawn struggle against the cruel and orgiastic rites of primitive religions in the past from which we have emerged. The anthropologist's inhuman scientism inevitably overlooks these strivings, and even condemns them by implication, when accepting the achievement of stability as the supreme social problem.

Fortunately the social anthropologists' amorality is very effectively mitigated by his ambiguity. His moral sentiments are not dead but only repressed and heavily disguised behind his detached scientific terminology. They spring to life when he turns to the contemporary scene. He does not regard lynching, torture, or genocide as just other methods of safeguarding social stability, equal in rightness to the practice of kindness, tolerance, and peace. It soon turns out that he detests oppression and cruelty and loves justice and mercy as much as his unscientific fellow men. But, of course, as a scientist he cannot say so in these words. In his study of primitive people cruelty and injustice were called "aggressiveness" and "competitiveness" or by some other strictly observational name; so these names are now used as a scientific cloak for his condemnation of social evils and as an expression of his moral sentiments.

Indeed, by leave of the sociologist it will become once more respectable to know good and evil, and even to love the one and hate the other, provided only you always remember to express yourself decently in proper scientific terms. The public, which has learned to distrust its traditional morality, is only too happy to receive its substance back from the sociologist's hands in a scientifically branded wrapping. Having first established his intellectual superiority by the pretense of lacking moral sentiments, the sociologist is now acclaimed a second time for still possessing them. The hard-boiled realist with a heart of gold wins both ways every time; he is the great medicine man of this mid-century, the intellectual darling of our age.

This scientific masquerade might perhaps be harmless if the new scientific names were exact equivalents of the old traditional terms. But this is not so. Take the very center of our moral responsibility which we used to call our conscience. If we now call it our "superego," can we still uphold its claim to be free? No, to claim freedom for the superego would be sheer nonsense, for the superego is conceived as an interiorization of social constraint and hence cannot be free to resist such constraint.



Or take a term like "aggressiveness." It can be used to condemn or deplore almost anything that we dislike. Wars, revolutions, ideological conflicts are in fact indiscriminately huddled today under the heading of aggressiveness, without any questions being asked as to the justice, right, or truth of either side or about our duty in this respect. We retire instead to the height of scientific detachment, from which the whole scene of historic conflict appears as one vast promiscuous brawl, and whence we can view with equal superiority the figures of Hitler and Churchill, of Stalin and Roosevelt, as persons afflicted with the same unfortunate aggressiveness or inferiority complex or frustration, or death wish, or sado-masochism, or whatever else may be going. From these heights we may start speculating about the mistakes made in the early house training of these personages or indulge in some other flights of science fiction—by which we are safely protected from ever encountering our true responsibilities.

Owing to the secretly harbored good sense of social anthropologists, social psychologists, etc., and of the public responding to them, this scientific masquerade may do comparatively little harm. It may be only futile. But even so there must be some fierce necessity compelling us to indulge in such absurdities. And I suggest that we have only to look into ourselves to recognize what compels us to perform these antics. The critical imperative of rejecting any belief that can quite conceivably be doubted has become second nature with us. To assert any belief uncritically as a matter of our faith has come to be regarded as an offense against reason. We feel in it the menace of obscurantism and of an authoritarian restriction of free thought. Belief in science is the only belief left which we still feel entitled to hold on these grounds. So we are compelled to transpose all the rest of our beliefs into scientific teachings, and where this proves impossible we try at least to dress them up as scientific teachings.

#### IV

This concludes my sketch of the relation between science and faith within the area of traditional European thought. This tradition has led up to a situation in which a mistaken pursuit of intellectual honesty has led us into a veritable carnival of intellectual pretenses. Yet, for all that, I do not think that our disorders are more menacing in themselves than others that have faced our European ancestors at previous periods of our long and venturesome history. I think that the people of Britain, France, Switzerland, Italy, or the United States are not threatened by an internal crisis of our civilization today to a greater, but perhaps to a lesser extent than



during the French Revolution or the Reformation. If I have enlarged on the anomalies and perplexities of our Western situation it is because here lies our primary responsibility. We must cease complaining about the foolishness of humanity, or its lack of faith, or its suicidal tendencies. There is no such thing as the thought or the will of humanity. Humanity is deeply divided, and our primary responsibility lies in that half to which we belong. I have enlarged on the internal situation of Western thought also because an analysis of our internal disorders leads us directly to the understanding of the menace facing us outside.

The totalitarianism of the East can be formulated most simply as the attempt to carry out in real earnest and to the bitter end the intellectual tendencies generated by the critical movement of the West. This intellectual radicalism showed itself already with the first spread of free thinking from England to France and from there to Prussia and Russia. I shall focus on the extreme case of Russia, which has proved so fateful. The story was told prophetically by Dostoevsky in *The Possessed*, and an earlier stage of it was brilliantly presented by Turgenev in *Fathers and Sons*. It is the story of Russian nihilism and of its transformation into the Russian revolutionary movement of which Lenin and Stalin were the ultimate products. Recent historic studies have confirmed and expanded this fictional account by ample factual evidence.

Russian nihilism was in its original form, as it emerged a hundred years ago, simply a utilitarian ethic developed to its logical conclusions. Western utilitarianism was one of the earliest attempts to justify moral principles on the grounds of a mechanical view of man by identifying morality with man's appetites. This was achieved by first equating desire with utility, then utility with social utility, and finally social utility with ethical principles. The trick went undiscovered since everybody was agreed about the truth of morality and was pleased to see it securely anchored in human physiology. The utilitarians were the first to exploit modern man's weakness for the hard-boiled realist with a heart of gold.

But the Russians were not prepared to participate in this masquerade. Their nihilists decided to reject in earnest all action that was not purely selfish. Nihilist theoreticians declared war not only on religion, but also on philosophy, morality, and the manners of human intercourse, rejecting even the value of art. They posed the question whether it is permitted to cut the throat of one's mother, and answered, "Yes, why not, if I desire it and find it useful?" They declared that this followed from the scientific

conception of man as a mere machine or mere animal, and in this I think they were right.

But, once more, this was not the end of the story. I have described how in the West the destruction of the Christian balance between the consciousness of sin and the hope of salvation released an unprecedented flood of moral demands into the temporal field. Nihilism rendered morality altogether homeless and thus made the entire force of man's moral passions overflow into the only channel that was still open to them: namely, into the nihilist's total negation of existing society. Implacable destruction, the pitiless pulverization of every human institution became the nihilist's social program; it being silently understood that beyond this destruction there would spontaneously arise a state of universal beatitude.

We may say that the nihilist's denial of morality was betrayed by his own humanitarian passions, which impelled him to consecrate himself to the revolutionary cause. Yet his nihilism prevailed in reducing this revolution to a process of sheer destruction, pursued by conspiratorial methods and with a complete disregard of morality.

This was before the advent of Marxism in Russia. When Marxism came it was received there with greater enthusiasm than anywhere else. For it fitted in beautifully with the nihilist's revolutionary conception. Marxism was a science which confirmed both the destructive hatreds of nihilism and also its boundless expectations. In spite of his ice-cold principles the nihilist was still obviously a romantic figure, whose humanitarian sentiments were insufficiently disguised by his merciless utterances. Now all moral passions could be effectively concealed and at the same time scientifically sanctioned by identifying them with an alleged mechanical process of historic necessity.

Marx claimed to have transformed Socialism from a utopia into a science. What actually happened was that socialist humanitarianism was identified with the predictions of a fictitious social science. This identification, which in the West was so often performed as an intellectual masquerade, was carried out to the letter under Marxian Communism. As a result moral passion was converted into blind fanaticism, a fanaticism protected by an appeal to science, as to the supreme and only authority left intact by the critical movement.

## V

What we have to do now seems to me quite obvious, and as difficult as it is obvious. We must get rid of the obsession which forbids us to

believe anything that we could conceivably doubt. The critical movement which we inherited from Greece has brought us immeasurable benefit through the past centuries. It was the battle axe of intellectual honesty, of free thought, and of independent personality. But the benefits of this movement are nearing exhaustion while its dangers are growing fast. In the West it has forced us into an intellectual masquerade, a pretense of scientific justification of our beliefs, which weakens and debauches them. In the East it has reached its logical terminus in a combination of nihilist theory and fanatical action.

Our obvious course is emancipation from the critical imperatives which make such nonsense and bring such disaster. It should have become clear by now that the method of discovering truth by eliminating everything that can be conceivably doubted is misleading. Modern high-powered doubt can shake our truest beliefs. We must reject Mill's formula. The warrant for our most profound convictions does not lie in the fact that so far no one has been able to disprove them. My belief that it was better to continue to fight in Korea rather than to surrender to their masters the prisoners who rebelled against communism has no warrant "in a standing invitation to the world to prove it unfounded." On the contrary, nothing is easier and more popular among modern writers, as it was once before in the times of Plato, than to "prove" that justice is but the will of the stronger. Proving or disproving has a proper meaning in science and in the law courts; it has no bearing on the beliefs which sustain our existence as moral beings. We must resolutely teach ourselves once more openly to hold these beliefs as an act of faith.

This is very difficult because it evokes the danger of obscurantism and of an arbitrary suppression of free thought. If we repudiate the absurdity of dealing with our own responsibilities by the methods of science, can we avoid setting up an antiscientific attitude which endangers the legitimate position of science?

However, to me these difficulties only indicate that we cannot renew the guiding maxims of a civilization without an all-embracing creative effort. I believe that such an effort is maturing today in our midst, and that you will see it at work in many places if you look round you with the eyes of hope.

# *The Call to the Christian Ministry*

CARROLL A. WISE

THROUGHOUT THE HISTORY of the Christian faith and back into the Hebrew origins of our faith, the "call" has been considered of great importance. Along with this there has been considerable emphasis on the unusual and dramatic aspects of the experience surrounding the call. Many times there has been an appeal to these unusual and dramatic factors as indicative of the validity of the call. The burning bush, the vision of Isaiah in the temple, the experience of Paul on the road to Damascus, and other such experiences come readily to our minds. Our problem is to try to understand the meaning of the psychological aspects of this experience and the relation of this to the religious significance of the "call."

## I

With the understanding that the persons we are about to describe do not fit into hard and fast categories, and that there is a great deal of overlapping, we shall proceed to talk about the experience of the call as we have known it in various persons. We should keep in mind here that we are talking about individual persons with whom the author has had a counseling relationship of sufficient depth to come to understand at least something of their motivation for going into the Christian ministry or some other form of Christian service. On these individual cases, we cannot generalize too far. However, we are simply giving some of the results of a number of years of work in this area for whatever it might be worth to those who are in positions of leadership.

First, there is the young person who with much honest thought, in consultation with family, friends, and pastor, arrives at the decision that God has called him into the ministry. There is in his experience little of the unusual or the dramatic. He hears no voices, he sees no visions, he feels no inner compulsion that forces him into the ministry. His experience

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is of quite a different nature. This youth has made some study of himself; perhaps has taken some psychological tests, and knows what his abilities and interests are. Further, he knows what he likes to do in the way of work. He knows that he likes to work with people, that he likes to speak on his feet before groups, and that he likes to do other things that fall into the line of responsibility of the minister. He has been brought up in the church, and has a background of understanding the Christian message and the Christian ministry. He has become aware through various experiences of the need of the world for the Gospel, and has come to an inner conviction that his life should be dedicated to meet this need. In this youth there is real strength. There is a courage to move ahead against obstacles. He believes that he is placing his abilities at a point where there is a profound human need with a sense of high dedication to a God who is seeking to meet human need and lift humanity to a higher level. This man will possess a deep, quiet earnestness and power which will be a blessing to many people who fall within the area of his ministry. People will intuitively feel that he fits into the ministry of the God whom he preaches.

We do not mean to suggest that this youth has had an easy time making his decision. In fact, he has had some difficulties. Any youth who honestly faces the possibility and challenge of the ministry in our culture will face problems. He will perhaps have some close friends, teachers, or members of his family who discourage him. He has abilities which point to a promising future in some other calling. The ministry places certain personal limitations on him; it calls for sacrifices he may not be ready to make, it requires a dedication and commitment, which only a person who has counted and accepted the costs can discharge without a great sense of frustration. This boy has faced these issues to a greater or less degree, and has emerged with the conviction that he should dedicate his life to the ministry.

## II

Another kind of youth who experiences a call to the ministry is the one who sees the ministry as something of a place of refuge, a position which gives him a sense of security, a situation in which he can be dependent on a large organization or on God.

In the motivation of such a youth there are at least two strong factors. One is the failure to outgrow a sense of dependency which is normal in childhood, but which becomes unhealthy if it is retained to the same degree in adult life. The youth is usually basically dependent on his mother, but



this dependency gets shifted to the church or to God. God becomes a kind of a cosmic mother figure who will take care of him, insure his success, as long as he does not go against the will of God.

The other motivation is anxiety. Any adult who feels this kind of immature dependency will resent it and may develop deep feelings of hostility against the object of the dependency. He will then feel very anxious and guilty about his hostility. Because of his dependency, his sexual feelings may not have matured fully, and he may find himself in strong sexual conflict. This results in more anxiety and guilt, and may tend to relate sex and hostility to each other, since neither impulse is acceptable to the person on whom he feels dependent.

This man frequently reports something of the unusual or dramatic in his call to the ministry. On the other hand, he may report that he decided for the ministry at the suggestion of another person, his mother, father, a pastor. There is an attractiveness about the ministry, since it seems to offer a kind of dependency which he unconsciously seeks. However, if he has strong sexual conflicts, he will feel that he is not the kind of person who belongs in the ministry. He may also be aware of many anxieties in regard to failure in the ministry, and find himself seriously hampered by these feelings. Sometimes this boy does fail in theological school, not from lack of intelligence, but from lack of interest and lack of drive. At moments he will have a strong sense of rebellion against the ministry, the church, and God, but he will also feel too weak to express this openly or to give up the ministry.

This emotional situation, like others, exists in different persons to various degrees. Some are more dependent than others, and remain more immature than others. Some are very difficult to help because of the severity of their problem and the rigidity of their character structure. Others, whose conflict is not so severe, and who have developed more strength, can gain insight into their need and seek help. With proper help, they may outgrow the immature dependency and may find much more mature and wholesome motivation for staying in the ministry. Such persons have been known to become very effective ministers after such a therapeutic experience.

As an illustration of another kind of reaction, let us consider the following youth. This young man was the son of foreign-born parents who had been brought up in this country in one of our Protestant denominations. After he had finished high school, he developed the idea that he wanted to go into the ministry. Through the help of the pastor, he entered



college. Then followed a series of adverse experiences through which he failed in his first year in three different colleges. At this stage, he was referred for counseling. Suspecting an incapacity for college work, the counselor had him take a series of psychological tests. These tests revealed two facts: this boy did not have sufficient intelligence to do the work of a college freshman in any standard college, and second, he had a very high mechanical ability. When the psychologist informed him of the results of the tests, he became very indignant. He came back to the counselor with extreme hostility against the psychologist. This emotional disturbance served to help bring out the real motivation in this man's "call to the ministry." He was struggling hard to overcome a deep feeling of inferiority because of the fact that his parents did not speak English, and he felt set off from others because of their foreign birth. He had a deep need to cover up the background of his family and show that he was an American and a Christian. His desire to go into the ministry was an attempt to develop a sense of status and power. It would make him superior to other people. He had two other professions in mind, law and banking. He absolutely refused to consider his high mechanical ability, and could not accept it as a gift of God to be fulfilled in his life. He insisted that it be one of these three professions or nothing. The last I knew of him, he was running a barber shop, though perhaps not aware that in this very work his mechanical ability was finding some expression!

This youth is somewhat of a contrast with the dependent youth. While there is some sense of dependency, there is a stronger aggressive reaction against it. He also feels hostile and anxious about his basic life relationships. Instead of accepting a passive dependency, he reacts by trying to dominate. Both the counselor and the psychologist were supposed to tell him what he wanted to be told, and the counselor was unsuccessful in helping him work through this to the point where he could face his real problem. Had this man had the intelligence to meet educational requirements, he would undoubtedly have gone on into the ministry. There he would have been aggressive and dominating while feeling very inferior, would have pushed programs through by hard work while feeling inadequate, would have preached authoritative sermons while feeling inwardly uncertain, and would have been very insensitive to the deeper spiritual needs of his people.

There is another kind of youth who may feel a call into the ministry, though his experience is more likely to be in terms of an intellectual conviction than a dramatic call. It is the youth who has learned how to

intellectualize all of his emotional problems, to build high intellectual defenses which prevent him from seeing his emotional conflicts, and who feels a strong urge to press his intellectual formulations on others. This man usually has high intelligence and is capable of a high level of intellectual work. He is usually weak in his relationships with others, feeling anxious in any close relationships and inclined to withdraw into the world of ideas. The zeal with which he will promote or defend ideas is very strong, indicating something of the strength of the emotional need which is rationalized by his ideas. This kind of personality structure, like the others, may exist in various degrees of intensity. In extreme forms, these persons are difficult to help because of the strength of their defenses. But in less extreme forms, they often seek and find help on the emotional level. Such help would result in a capacity for warm, human relationships and a freedom to use the intelligence to understand and cope creatively with reality situations, rather than for a defense. This should result in a very effective ministry, assuming that a wholesome religious interest is present.

### III

Relating the call to the ministry to emotional conflicts as we have been doing may be disturbing to some. It is clear, however, that in any free vocational choice, the needs of the person play a major role. Where those needs are in conflict, or where needs are exaggerated because of conflict, they will play a corresponding role in any vocational choice. It is becoming increasingly clear that emotional conflicts may play a part in the motivations behind the choice of any vocation. Some men choose a scientific or engineering field because they feel very inadequate in personal relationships, but find something of a sense of power in dealing with impersonal forces. It is a commonplace insight among psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers that people frequently enter those professions as a means of finding the answer to their own problems. We should not, therefore, be surprised if the same principle operates in the decision to go into the Christian ministry.

On the other hand, this insight is indispensable in counseling with young persons in regard to religious professions. Through counseling, a more realistic view of both religious work and of one's personality may be gained so that a more wholesome and Christian decision may be made.

To be sure, something more than a knowledge of oneself is involved in a Christian decision. It is a knowledge of oneself in relationship—relationship to God and to one's fellow men. At this point, the total work

of the pastor should have deep significance and effectiveness. Any truly Christian decision is free from either internal or external pressures such as we have been discussing. Such pressures grow out of faulty relationships. The relationship through which a Christian decision can be made is that of love, and love here is an affirmation and acceptance of oneself, others, and God in a manner which makes warm, spontaneous, outgoing activity possible. Such love and decisions growing from it spring from the very depths of being, and cannot be forced. God has created man with this freedom, and it is the task of the Church to foster it.

There is a distinction to be made here that is of great significance for both the man and the ministry. The important thing is not that emotional conflicts are related to the call; it is the man's attitude toward those conflicts and also toward the ministry itself because of the conflicts. The man who is trying to avoid or escape from his inner problems may use the ministry compulsively as a way of working his conflicts out on other persons. The man who is trying to face, understand and solve his own problems is following a very wholesome urge and to the extent that he is successful with himself, will become successful in helping others. So the significant fact is not so much that conflict is present, but the attitude toward the conflict and the nature of the solution that is being sought. The ministry can use men who have achieved a high level of emotional and spiritual maturity through the resolution of conflicts.

Let us now summarize briefly some of the kinds of conflicts which have actually been known to us to be behind a rather compelling sense of call into the Christian ministry. We have known more than one man, for example, whose call into the Christian ministry was definitely grounded in a deep conflict about sex. Some of these have been exhibitionists. Others have been homosexuals. Others have been tormented by masturbation. Still others have been involved in sexual experiences with the opposite sex. In all of them, there was a deep sense of anxiety about their inability to control their impulses. In a number of them, there was a definite conscious bargaining with God that they could remember in their praying. This bargain took the following form: "God, if you will forgive me for this terrible sin, I will repay you by giving my life in the ministry." In other words, the individual felt compelled by his sense of guilt to go into the ministry as a means of purchasing the forgiveness of God. This is not, of course, in harmony with the Christian teaching about a God who forgives because of his love for his children. It does, however, reveal something of what we have been speaking, that is, the relation of intense emotional con-

flicts to a sense of call. It also reveals the individual's belief about the nature of the God who is giving him the call, and his relationship to that God.

There is another kind of conflict which seems to lead some men into the ministry. It is a conflict of power. It usually grows out of a relationship with parents in which there is a great deal of hostility and rebellion created. The boy feels intensely guilty about this hostility. It becomes a threat to his ego quite as much as guilt over sex becomes a threat to other people. If the boy's parents are not religious, he may express his rebellion by going into the ministry. If the boy's parents are religious and want him to go into the ministry, he may express his rebellion by refusing to go into the ministry. Deeper than this, however, there is another aspect to this particular reaction. Persons who are basically and deeply hostile always feel a deep need to gain power over other people. They also often feel a strong conscious need to show that they love other people. This is a rather common type of psychological reaction in which the person develops strong conscious attitudes and ideas which are just the opposite of the way he feels down deep within his soul. These conscious ideas and attitudes offset the threat which he feels to his ego because of his deeper hostilities.

The ministry offers a fine opportunity for the expression of power under the guise of Christian love. It gives a person an opportunity to build up defenses against his hostilities, by giving his life in Christian service. There is also a certain type of sublimation of hostility in this particular kind of experience. Because of the guilt that such people feel, they may develop a strong inner compulsion, that is, a feeling that they simply have to go into the ministry. Guilt in these persons operates in much the same way that it does in persons who feel that their sexual life is not what it should be. The need for punishment or for atonement is great wherever there is a great sense of guilt. This need becomes a source of compelling power to drive a man into the ministry.

Let us now pull together in a general way some of the basic processes that operate in these experiences. There is a severe conflict within the person, or between the person and others, which is a severe threat to his sense of well-being. It creates a sense of anxiety and of guilt. A sense of call, on the other hand, gives such a person a feeling of acceptance, of prestige, of worth and of power. It is as though he said, "If God is for me, who can be against me?" If his conflict is intrapsychic, he may feel that if he can get God on his side, then he will have strength to combat the "devil" that is within him. Out of his anxiety and guilt, there will come a compulsiveness which is not the compulsion of love. The sense of call

in such persons is definitely an attempt to deal with an emotional conflict, which, for the sake of health and growth, should be resolved in other ways.

Sometimes these men show a great deal of timidity and fear in their relationships with other people, but when they enter the pulpit, they suddenly become men of great power, except that their power is of an explosive and often antagonistic nature which does not become a channel for the mediation of the grace or the love of God. These men often find themselves in deep conflict about the ministry. They cannot leave it, and yet they do not want to stay in it. The sense of rebellion that leads them into the ministry often finds expression against the ministry. Bishops and district superintendents often find this type of man to be one of their greatest problems.

#### IV

We move on now to another experience of call into the Christian ministry. This is one that is even more difficult to deal with. It is the boy who has developed a sense of mission in life out of a frank mental illness. There is a form of mental illness known as catatonic schizophrenia in which the major symptoms are a sense of world catastrophe, a sense of identification with a cosmic figure, such as God or Christ, and a sense of mission that one is called upon to be some kind of a savior in the day of catastrophe. These ideas express themselves in various forms and are very familiar to all who have dealt with mental patients. There are times when men who have passed through such experiences regain their stability and feel they must go into the Christian ministry. There are also men who suffer from a mild form of this illness, who never get into a mental hospital, but who enter the ministry out of a driving sense of mission which is an expression of the illness.

There are two kinds of reconstructions to such illnesses that are important in considering the call into the ministry. In one, the individual arrives at certain insights which give him a basis for personal integration and in which he believes there is some universal validity. He, therefore, sets out to preach his insights to others. Very frequently these insights are of a religious nature. If the person has qualities of leadership, he soon finds others who tend to accept his ideas and a group is formed with the person as the leader. Or the person may enter an established church and find a group already formed for him. In his leadership, such a person will insist that the group accept his ideas, that there be no divergence from his opinions, and where any difference occurs he will feel it as a very personal threat to which he responds with hostility.



There is a pseudo-strength in this man so long as he finds acceptance and a following. But he requires that the group identify with him, rather than his identifying with the group. His need, not theirs, is the important matter. The strong sense of self-importance which accompanies the cosmic identification of the schizophrenic process is lessened but not sufficiently released. Such a person may perform tasks of real social value. However, damage may be done to the extent that his attitudes and ideas become coercively normative for other persons.

There is another kind of reconstruction from such illness. This is one in which the person succeeds in working out his inner conflicts so that he can give up his sense of self-importance and compulsive sense of mission. He may retain a great many insights from his illness which he will find helpful in his personal relationships. However, the quality of these relationships will be different. They will be of a more mature quality, in which the group is helped to discover its own needs and how it can meet its own needs. In this person, there is an understanding and a humility. His will be a "ministry unto," rather than being "ministered unto."

Any person who has undergone such a profound illness is not capable of working through to this second kind of reconstruction by himself. He is in need of intensive psychotherapy at the hands of a skilled physician. This is not always successful. But the church should insist upon this as a prerequisite to any acceptance into the ministry. The church faces a serious responsibility in preventing sick persons from getting into positions of leadership where they may damage and distort the lives of others, even though such persons may feel that they have a "call from God."

## V

Space permits only a brief mention of two further problems. One of these is the rather obvious part played by cultural factors in the experience of the call. The expectation and idealization of certain kinds of experiences by a group or a church creates a cultural condition which encourages and produces such experiences. We have known young people to struggle to produce within themselves a certain kind of experience which was supposed to be the true mark of a call. We have also known other young people to doubt if they had a call, because they never had such an extreme experience as actually hearing a voice calling them into the ministry.

Another problem is the relation of sudden and dramatic aspects of experience to the validity of the call. Unusual and dramatic aspects of experience of a call may indicate deep psychological conflict. Sudden, im-



pulsive decisions also should be scrutinized carefully. Some of the most valid calls have come to youth in terms of a growing inner conviction. The test of a call into the ministry, however, is not in the manner in which it comes. The test should be solely on the fruits of the experience within the life of the individual. If we ask what the experience means to the person who has it and what kind of a God is revealed through the experience, we have some basis for helping a youth decide whether or not his call is a valid one. The day should be past, however, when we seek to produce sudden and cataclysmic experiences in youth in order to provide validity for the idea of a call to the ministry.

We come now to some practical steps that might be suggested. These will be offered only as general suggestions without detailed elaboration. First, it would seem that in our recruitment of young people for Christian service, the emphasis should always be placed on the needs of persons and groups and the abilities of young people to meet those needs. These abilities should not be entirely considered in terms of ability to speak on one's feet and do other forms of the work of the pastorate. A great deal of emphasis should be placed on the capacity of the candidates for emotional growth, so that in their service they may be motivated by and develop their relationships on the basis of an increasingly mature Christian love. In other words, we would say here that the emphasis in recruitment should be on quality of personality, not on numbers or technical ability. The ministry should be presented as something of a challenge for young people who want to give themselves in a life of redemptive service rather than a refuge for those who feel weak.

A second suggestion is the development of the curriculum of theological education so that more attention is given to the emotional growth of the student. There are a good many aspirants to the ministry who should not be permitted to enter a theological seminary until they have had a rather considerable course of help in working out their personal emotional difficulties. On the other hand, there are other candidates whose emotional difficulties are not so severe, for whom some provision for help should be made during the theological course. Beyond this, we would feel that intellectual training for the ministry is not enough. The theological curriculum should be so set up that while intellectual values will in no way be minimized, there should also be ample opportunity on both group and individual levels for *every* man going into the ministry to face himself and his motivations, his quality of relationships with other people, and to achieve a higher level of emotional growth.

There are those of us who feel that while all honest work is sacred in the sight of God, there is an especially significant burden laid upon a Christian minister today. It is a burden which calls for the highest type of capacities in the human mind and spirit. It is a task which is not to be carried on by man alone, but only by man in a profound sense of co-operation with God and through the guidance and strength of the Holy Spirit. On the human level, this means doing everything possible to help pastors develop their capacity to give love so that they may become effective mediators of the love of God. Only in this way can we bring the idea of the call into the ministry into a closer relationship with what we believe to be the nature of the God who gives the call.

# The Revised Standard Version of the Old Testament: An Appraisal

THEOPHILE JAMES MEEK

## I

TO MY MIND a true translation of the Old Testament into English should reproduce the idiom of its languages, Hebrew and Aramaic, not necessarily in literal terms, but in the idiom of English. At the same time the flavor of the original and its figures of speech should be retained, insofar as these do not violate the English idiom.

Hebrew and Aramaic are languages in which the co-ordination of clauses is the rule, and subordination the exception. In contrast, English is quite the opposite, with subordination rather more frequent than co-ordination. Hence the conjunction "and" is comparatively rare in English as contrasted with Hebrew and Aramaic, and it ought not to appear more frequently in the translation of the Old Testament than it does in English regularly,<sup>1</sup> but that is not the case with the Revised Standard Version. It appears less frequently there than in the earlier versions, but there are still hundreds of occurrences that are unnecessary, and they give the translation a very un-English flavor.

In their *Preface* the translators have said that their revision is based on the traditional text, but they have felt free to make emendations when they believed that the text had suffered in transmission, and this constitutes one of the striking differences between this version and the earlier ones. For example, in the Book of Isaiah there are no less than twelve emendations derived from the recently discovered Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah, which one of the revisers, Dr. Orlinsky, declares to be worthless from a textual viewpoint.<sup>2</sup> Throughout their translation the revisers show a certain fondness for the Greek text; they follow Kittel's textual notes rather slavishly, and these we know are not always dependable. The revisers were supposed

<sup>1</sup> Meek, T. J., *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 64 (1945), 2f.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 43 (1953), 329ff.

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to justify their emendations in footnotes, but they have not always done this (e.g., Lev. 26:41).<sup>3</sup>

Another striking difference between this version and previous authorized versions is the use of "you" when anyone other than God is addressed.<sup>4</sup> In fact, the translators claim for this version that it is modern in every respect. However, the present translation is only a revision, and much of Tudor English still remains in it. Alongside the indicative mood in conditional clauses we have the subjunctive; e.g., "if it is true" in Deut. 17:4, but "if it be true" in Deut. 13:14. It is now regarded as obsolete to use "shall" in a command, but the revisers regularly do, and only seldom the more modern "must."

There are many phrases that cannot be regarded as modern English or good English. One of the most striking is in Deut. 19:11, "wounds him mortally so that he dies." Others are "you shall not be afraid of the face of man" (Deut. 1:17); "only take heed, and keep your soul diligently" (Deut. 4:9); "one who, when he hears the words of this sworn covenant, blesses himself in his heart" (Deut. 29:19); "the people gathered themselves together to Aaron" (Exod. 32:1); "And Moses saw all the work, and behold, they had done it" (Exod. 39:43); "all the women whose hearts were moved with ability" (Exod. 35:26); "the LORD called him out of the mountain" (Exod. 19:3); "the days of Isaac were a hundred and eighty years" (Gen. 35:28); "strengthen your heart and tarry until the day declines" (Judg. 19:8).

The revisers manifestly tried to avoid the use of "nor" after a negative, and in this they differ from previous translators. Hence we get rather awkward phrases at times, as in Josh. 22:19, "only do not rebel against the LORD, or make us as rebels," where "or" replaces the older and smoother "nor." On the other hand, we sometimes have "nor" where we would expect "or," as in Lev. 10:9, "Drink no wine nor strong drink, you nor your sons." In this, as in other things, there is no consistency of usage.

Sometimes the revisers are quite careful not to carry the Hebrew idiom over into English when it is not good English, and to avoid this they do not hesitate to paraphrase, as in Ruth 2:13, where the Hebrew phrase "I find favor in your eyes" appears as "You are most gracious to me." Sometimes the principle is carried too far, as in Exod. 32:35, where a literal rendering makes good English, "The LORD smote the people." The ren-

<sup>3</sup> On points in this paragraph see also Joseph Reider, *JQR*, 43 (1953), 382f.

<sup>4</sup> Poor editing has overlooked several occurrences of the older "thou," and in at least one place we have both "your" and "thy" in a single verse, Ps. 89:4.

dering in the Revised Standard Version, "And the LORD sent a plague upon the people," is interpretation rather than translation. On the whole, however, the revisers stick closely to the Hebrew phraseology, and the result is Hebrew English.

An expression like "all the great work of the LORD which he did" (Deut. 11:7) is a Hebrew idiom; its English equivalent is "all the great work which the LORD did" (correct in Judg. 2:7). "I am your bone and your flesh" (Judg. 9:2) is another Hebrew idiom, whose English equivalent is "I am your own flesh and blood." One can "swear a land" (Gen. 50:24) in Hebrew, but not in English. In Hebrew one often initiates action by the use of the verb *qûm*; one "arises and does" something; in English he "proceeds" or "prepares to do" something. The Revised Standard Version almost invariably follows the Hebrew idiom, but in at least one place (Judg. 19:5) it has the proper English idiom, "he prepared to go." In Hebrew one "burns with fire," and he "stones with stones," but "with fire" and "with stones" are simply determinatives and should not be reproduced in the English translation; but only rarely are they omitted in the Revised Standard Version.

In Judg. 3:7 and elsewhere we have the strange combination "Baals and Asheroth." Both words are transliterations of Hebrew words, but the first is pluralized like an English word, while the second has the Hebrew plural ending. One should write either "Baals and Asherahs" or "Baalim and Asheroth." Usually the phrase *k'kôl-<sup>a</sup>sher* is translated literally, to make the heavy Hebraic expression "according to all that"; but at least once we have the English idiom, "just as" (Josh. 21:44). Sometimes a literal translation is very effective, e.g., "stiff-necked" as against "stubborn." The revisers have both (e.g., "stiff-necked" in Exod. 32:9, but "stubborn" in Deut. 9:6).

It is clear from the above illustrations that what we have in the Revised Standard Version is a mixture of the new and the old, of real English and Bible English. There has long been a controversy among scholars as to what parts of the New Testament may be translation Greek, but in days to come there will scarcely be any doubt that the Revised Standard Version is translation English. All the reasons advanced for the revision hold for an entirely new translation into the English of today, untrammelled by the past. What we should have had was a new translation and not simply a new revision,<sup>5</sup> where changes could be made only by a two-thirds' vote of the total membership of the revising committee.

<sup>5</sup> I understand that the English Revision Committee are preparing a new translation, and not a mere revision.

A major departure from the practice of the American Standard Version, of which the Revised Standard Version is a revision, is the rendering of the divine name by "LORD,"<sup>6</sup> which is no name at all, but a title substituted by the Jews in their reading of Scripture because the divine name was regarded as too holy to be pronounced. It is true that the American Standard Version uses a hybrid word "Jehovah," but at least it is a name, as "LORD" is not. To date no one has had the courage to produce a translation with the divine name in it as in the Hebrew text.

To my mind a translation should be intelligible to the ordinary reader. The revisers make this claim for their translation. There are not many passages that are meaningful, but there are some. Here are a few: Gen. 48:6, "they shall be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance"; Judg. 8:16, "he took thorns of the wilderness and briers and with them taught the men of Succoth"; Exod. 29:40, "beaten oil"; Exod. 31:8, "the pure lampstand"; Exod. 28:15, "a breastpiece of judgment"; Lev. 25:9, "you shall send abroad the loud trumpet"; Exod. 23:21, "my name is in him."

## II

In their *Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the Old Testament* the revisers claim that they have corrected the variant spellings of proper names appearing in earlier versions which were due to the fact that the words had sometimes special stress (known as "pause" in Hebrew) and hence a special vocalization. Rather strangely, however, the Revised Standard Version has two spellings of Mizpeh: Mizpeh in the Book of Joshua and Mizpah everywhere else. The name ought always to appear as Mizpeh, because Mizpah is simply the pausal vocalization.

In their *Introduction* the revisers also claim the correction of what they call "special locative forms of place names" (i.e., names with the terminative *h*-ending). They did correct a number of these, but by no means all; e.g., we have Ephrath in Gen. 35:16, but Ephrathah in Ruth 4:11; Gudgodah and Jotbathah in Deut. 10:7 in place of Gudgod and Jotbah. On the other hand, the final *h* is dropped in the case of Maralah in Josh. 19:11, but it is not at all certain that the *h* here is terminative.

The revisers also claim to correct the spelling of proper names in which there is a double letter, but they fail to double the *v* in Hivvites. What is called "the River" in the Hebrew text usually appears as "the Euphrates" in the Revised Standard Version, which is interpretation rather than transla-

<sup>6</sup> There are several instances where "God" should be read "Lord" (e.g., Ps. 97:8), and a considerable number where "Lord" should be read "God," and vice versa.



tion. Similarly, the Egyptian loan-word *yôṣr* is sometimes translated "river" (e.g., Exod. 2:3) and sometimes "the Nile" (e.g., Exod. 1:22). The spelling "Necho" has long been the accepted one for that name both within and outside the Bible, but the revisers read "Neco," transliterating Hebrew *kaph* by *c*, yet they do not do this in the case of "Zechariah" and other proper names with *kaph*.

In fact, a very serious charge against the Revised Standard Version is that it is full of inconsistencies—inconsistencies in spelling, in punctuation, and in translation. The book simply teems with inconsistencies which should never have been overlooked, particularly in a version intended for use in churches throughout the country.

There are inconsistencies in spelling. The most striking is "mouldy" on page 233 (Josh. 9:5) and "moldy" on the same page (Josh. 9:12). In Josh. 19:14 "Iphtahel" is spelled without a hyphen, but with one in vs. 27. When a proper name is a compound, the second element is regularly not capitalized, but in the case of "Rehoboth-Ir" (Gen. 10:11) it is capitalized. "Great Sea" is capitalized in Josh. 15:12, but not in vs. 47.

There are also inconsistencies in punctuation. Usually a clause following a colon begins with a small letter, but in Deut. 14:7 and elsewhere it begins with a capital. In Exod. 18:24, 25 we have two sentences absolutely identical in construction, but vs. 25 has a comma after the first clause, and vs. 24 none. There are simply scores of inconsistencies in punctuation, some on every page.

More serious still are the inconsistencies in translation. A phrase which is identical in Hebrew in its several occurrences should be identical in its translation, provided the context is the same, but the revisers are anything but consistent in their translations. The phrase which I translate "to deliver into the power of" appears in at least four forms: "to give over to" (Judg. 2:14), "to give into the hand of" (Judg. 11:21), "to give into the hands of" (Judg. 15:12), and "to give into the power of" (Judg. 2:23). In Gen. 25 we have both "to be gathered to one's people" (vs. 8) and "to be gathered to one's kindred" (vs. 17). Sometimes you "live long" in the Revised Standard Version (Deut. 4:26); sometimes you "prolong your days" (Deut. 4:40). Sometimes you "eat and are full" (Deut. 6:11); sometimes you "eat and are filled" (Deut. 14:29); or again you "eat and are satisfied" (Lev. 26:26).

The very common phrase "the sons of Israel," where "the sons of" is one way of expressing the genitive, appears usually as "the people of Israel," but it is also rendered "the children of Israel" (e.g., Deut. 4:44) and "the

men of Israel" (e.g., Josh. 2:2). The phrase "to the very end" in Deut. 31:24 appears as "until they were finished" in vs. 30. In Deut. 31:30 we read that Moses "spoke in the ears of," but in Deut. 32:44 he "recited in the hearing of." Usually a man "is the father of" a son, but in Deut. 28:41 he "begets" a son. In Eccl. 3:17 Koheleth says "I said in my heart," but in 2:1 he expresses himself in the English idiom, "I said to myself." Identically the same construction in Lev. 20:11 and 20:21 appears quite different in translation. Lev. 24:2 is a duplicate of Exod. 27:20, but one would never know it from the translation in the Revised Standard Version. In Gen. 1:8 we have the impossible translation "Heaven," but correctly "the heavens" in vs. 9. And so throughout scores of examples.

The translators of the King James Version in their *Preface* very frankly say that they made free use of synonyms to improve the literary style. The practice was condemned by the authors of the American Standard Version,<sup>7</sup> but despite that it is followed by the Revised Standard Version. It does not make for accuracy of translation, nor is it true to the style of the original.

If it is accepted that phrases which are identical in Hebrew should be identical in translation, the reverse of this should also hold: phrases that are different in Hebrew should be different in translation, but this is by no means the case in the Revised Standard Version. In Hebrew there are two quite different expressions, *hayyôm*, "today," and *hayyôm hazzeh*, "this day," but only rarely are the two distinguished in the Revised Standard Version. In Deut. 28, vss. 25 and 37, two quite different words are translated "horror." In Judg. 9:54 two entirely different words are translated "kill." And so in many other instances.

Besides being full of inconsistencies the translation is full of mistakes—mistakes in spelling, in punctuation, and in translation. Most of the mistakes in spelling are probably typographical, but some are due to carelessness in preparing the copy; e.g., "Gibbeah" for "Gibeah" in Josh. 15:57.

I do not profess to be an authority on punctuation, which after all is largely a matter of good judgment, but there are a few rules which have become almost, if not wholly, obligatory. There is, for example, the rule that the comma should not be used between two parts of a compound predicate except when the two verbs differ in tense or voice. This was manifestly not a rule with the revisers because it is broken or followed at the whim of the translator, much more often broken (e.g., Gen. 8:12) than observed (e.g., Gen. 8:9b). Another rule in punctuation is that a restrictive subordinate clause should not be set off by a comma. This rule

<sup>7</sup> *Anglo-American Bible Revision* (1879), pp. 133ff.

is quite well observed, but not always (e.g., Exod. 23:28). Still another rule is that we should use the colon after a "thus"-clause, but in several instances (e.g., Josh. 22:16) the comma is used in place of the colon.

The mistakes in translation are of many kinds. One is in the rendering of individual words. For example, the word *shôr* when applied to a sacrificial animal must not be translated "ox," which is a castrated animal, and such was of course never sacrificed by the Hebrews. In the Revised Standard Version, as in all previous versions, the word is almost always translated "ox," whether the animal referred to was a sacrificial animal or a draught animal. Human beings are like sheep. We all tend to follow blindly in the path of our predecessors. Someone long ago translated *shôr* as "ox," and the rest of us blindly followed after. And so the revisers here and in hosts of other cases.

In Exod. 23:28, Deut. 7:20, and Josh. 24:12 there appears a word which is found nowhere else and has regularly been translated "hornets," as it is in the Revised Standard Version ("the hornet" in Josh. 24:12), but how hornets could drive out alien nations from the way of the Hebrews I have never been able to understand. The word is all but identical with the regular Hebrew word for "leprosy"<sup>8</sup> and probably means "leprosy," or possibly "plague," but certainly not "hornets." The word *n'ûm* is a noun, meaning "oracle," and yet in the Revised Standard Version it is regularly translated as if it were the verb "to say," with the result that two totally different expressions in Hebrew, "the oracle of the LORD" and "the LORD says," appear as identical in the Revised Standard Version, "the LORD says." In Deut. 3:16f. and Josh. 13:23, 27 there appears the phrase "the Jordan and its *g'bhûl*." The Revised Standard Version follows its predecessors in the impossible and meaningless translation, "the Jordan as a boundary." Comparison with the parallel expression "the Great Sea and its coastland" (e.g., Josh. 15:12) should have indicated the correct rendering, "the Jordan and its bottomland."

The preposition *'al* in identically the same contexts is translated "in addition to" (Exod. 29:25), "upon" or "on" (Lev. 3:5; 4:35; 5:12), and "with" (Lev. 8:28; 9:14). The correct translation in all six occurrences, as suggested by comparison with Lev. 9:17, is "in addition to." In Deut. 28:23 we have the translation "brass," but the ancients had no knowledge of brass, and the word must be translated "bronze," as it is elsewhere in the Revised Standard Version. Over and over again *w'lô* is translated "lest," but Hebrew has the word *pen* for "lest," and I know no lexicon or

<sup>8</sup> The only consonantal difference is final *tau* for final *he*, but these often interchange in Hebrew.

grammar that gives "lest" as a meaning of *w'lo'*. These are only a few of the numerous instances in which I would challenge the revisers in the meanings that they have given to Hebrew words.

### III

One would have thought that the revisers had sufficient knowledge of Hebrew grammar to avoid errors in this field, but that is not the case. Again they are anything but accurate, particularly in their treatment of the Hebrew verb. Hebrew uses the participle to express among other things continuous action and imminent action, and in a book like Deuteronomy it appears rather frequently, but not so in the revised version. In fact, the participle is so largely ignored that one might think that it was completely absent from the Hebrew language. On the other hand, there are translations of a participial nature, suggesting a participle in the original where there is none (e.g., Gen. 31:15).

In its verbal system Hebrew has no tense, but it does have two aspects: one the perfect, expressing action complete in the past, present, or future, usually translated by the past tense in English; the other the imperfect, expressing action incomplete, whether past, present, or future, usually translated into English by the present, the imperfect, or the future. The revisers are exceedingly careless in translating these aspects, often substituting the one for the other.

In Gen. 15:12 and Josh. 2:5 there are two good examples of the gerundive use of the infinitive. The second is correctly translated, but the first is not. In Gen. 5:32 the temporal clause is introduced by "after," as against the correct "when" in all the preceding temporal clauses, vs. 3 to 31. In Lam. 2:13 the revisers failed to note that "Jerusalem" is not genitive to "daughter," but in apposition to it; hence not "daughter of Jerusalem," but "daughter, Jerusalem."

More serious than mistakes in grammar are mistakes in syntax. One may know the meaning of every word in a sentence and be able to parse each with absolute accuracy, but if he fails to interpret the syntax correctly, his translation is bound to be wrong. Weighed in the balance of Hebrew syntax, the revisers are lamentably deficient.

One of the most glaring of their syntactical errors is the frequent interpretation of strong *waw* with the perfect to express purpose, and the simple *waw* with the imperfect and its related forms (cohortative, jussive, and imperative) to express result. Since strong *waw* (*waw* conversive) gives the perfect the force of an imperfect, it might be supposed that the perfect

with strong *waw* would have the same force as the imperfect with simple *waw*, but actually there is a difference. The former cannot indicate purpose, whereas the latter regularly does.<sup>9</sup> The difference between the two is well illustrated by Exod. 7:19, where both constructions appear: simple *waw* with the imperfect to express purpose, "that they may become blood," followed immediately by strong *waw* with the perfect, "and there shall be blood." The distinction between these two uses of *waw* was naturally unknown to the King James translators, and so slavishly do the revisers follow their predecessors that they continually confuse the two.

A rather common construction in Hebrew is the circumstantial clause, which ordinarily takes the form of having its subject first and its verb as a participle.<sup>10</sup> It is usually introduced by the conjunction *waw*, but it is sometimes asyndeton. The revisers almost completely ignore the clause. On the other hand, they sometimes translate a clause as circumstantial when it cannot be that (e.g., in Exod. 33:22a the circumstantial "while my glory passes by" should be the temporal "when my glory passes by").

Another kind of clause in Hebrew is the clause in the adverbial accusative of manner.<sup>11</sup> It is usually an asyndeton clause, but sometimes it is introduced by the conjunction *waw*. A good example is Deut. 9:12b, which reads "Your people whom you brought out of Egypt have acted basely, in that they have turned quickly from the path that I appointed them, by making themselves a molten image." The last two clauses are not independent sentences, as in the Revised Standard Version, but asyndeton clauses in the adverbial accusative of manner, the first telling how the people acted basely, and the second telling in what way they turned from the path appointed them. This is a frequent construction, particularly in the Book of Deuteronomy, and it is universally overlooked by the revisers.

Another construction that appears quite often, but is usually passed over, is the emphatic accusative of specification,<sup>12</sup> which is well illustrated by Gen. 1:4. This reads literally, "God saw, as for the light, that it was good"; in better English, "God saw that the light was good." All scholars have recognized the construction here, but they have overlooked most of the examples elsewhere, and so have the revisers. A good example is Deut. 9:13, which is literally "I see, as for this people, that behold, it is a stiff-necked people," but in the English idiom, "I see that this people is indeed a stiff-necked people."

<sup>9</sup> Meek, T. J., *JBL*, 64 (1945), 3f.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11ff.



Another construction frequently ignored by the Revised Standard Version is the perfect of instantaneous action.<sup>13</sup> The revisers recognize it in Gen. 23:11, but they overlook it in vs. 13, and likewise in many other places. It is the kind of perfect that we often get after the exclamatory particle *hinneh*, and it should be translated by the present in English; e.g., Gen. 1:29, "See, I give you all the seed-bearing plants," not "I have given you."

A serious syntactical error on the part of the revisers is the interpretation of the preposition *lamedh* as expressing instrument. This preposition can express agent after a passive verb, but under no circumstances can it express instrument, and yet the revisers make it do that in Lev. 11:24, "By these you shall become unclean," and in the expression "to smite by the edge of the sword," which I have discussed at length in the *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, No. 122. That at least one of the revisers was aware of my article is indicated by the correct translation, "to put to the sword," in Deut. 20:13. It is true that this translation loses the figure of the original, "to smite into the mouth of the sword," in which the sword is presented under the metaphor of a devouring monster, but I know no acceptable translation that will retain the metaphor, and the ordinary translation does not.

Another use of *lamedh* that is completely ignored by the revisers is the *lamedh* of degree, well illustrated by Deut. 9:8, literally, "the LORD was angry with you to the point of destroying you"; in idiomatic English, "the LORD was angry enough with you to destroy you."

Over and over again the revisers, following their predecessors, translate the temporal *lamedh* as expressing point of time, which can only be expressed by the preposition *beth*. As demonstrated by Brockelmann<sup>14</sup> and independently by myself,<sup>15</sup> *lamedh* can only express motion in time. The difference between *lamedh* and *beth* used temporally is well illustrated by Exod. 19:11, "Be ready by (*lamedh*) the third day; for on (*beth*) the third day the LORD will descend on Mount Sinai." Here the revisers differentiate between the two prepositions and translate correctly, but in Exod. 34:2, where we have the same two prepositions, used in exactly the same way as in 19:11, they are both interpreted as expressing point of time, and so elsewhere; e.g., Gen. 8:11, "in the evening," as against "toward evening"; Gen. 17:21, "at this season next year," as against "by this time next year"; Exod. 14:27, "when the morning appeared" (contrast Judg.

<sup>13</sup> Gesenius-Bergsträsser, *Hebräische Grammatik*, II (1929), 27, e.

<sup>14</sup> Brockelmann, Carl, *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen*, II (1913), §242, b.

<sup>15</sup> *JBL*, 67 (1948), 236ff.



19:26), as against "as morning broke." In Gen. 24:63 we have an expression which the revisers translate "in the evening," utterly ignoring *p'enôth* and making *lamedh* the equivalent of *beth*. The expression appears again in Deut. 23:11 (12), and this time the revisers translate somewhat more correctly "when evening comes on." The true translation, as Skinner long ago indicated,<sup>16</sup> is "toward the approach of evening" or "as evening comes on."

Another error inherited from the past is the translation "about" for *kaph* when used temporally with a noun (e.g., Exod. 9:18; contrast Josh. 11:6). Everyone has recognized that the temporal use of this preposition with an infinitive expresses point of time, somewhat more immediate than *beth*. It must have the same force when used temporally with a noun and cannot mean "about."

Another inheritance from the past is the translation of *zeh* in an expression like *zeh 'arbā'im shānāh* (Deut. 2:7) by "these forty years." This would make *zeh* a demonstrative adjective, which is absolutely impossible. To be an adjective *zeh* should be at the end instead of the beginning, and along with *shānāh* it should have the article. *Zeh* here is of course a demonstrative particle, and the phrase should be translated "for forty years now" or something like that.<sup>17</sup>

The revisers are cognizant of hendiadys and sometimes find it where it is not present, as in Song of Sol. 2:3, where they translate "with great delight I sat," but *waw* here is definitely conversive and introduces an object clause, "I long that I may sit." On the other hand, hendiadys is clearly found in the phrase *habb'rîth w'hesedh* in Deut. 7:9, where the article is generic, the *waw* is explicative, and the second word defines the first. The proper translation of the verse is, accordingly, "Be assured, then, that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who to a thousand generations keeps loving faith with those that love him and keep his commands," as against the revisers' "Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations." Besides violating a point in Hebrew syntax, this surely is not modern idiomatic English, and "steadfast love" is not a happy translation of *hesedh*.

That the revisers did not always follow blindly after their predecessors is evident from the fact that they sometimes recognize the consequential

<sup>16</sup> Skinner, John, *Genesis* (1910), p. 348.

<sup>17</sup> See Montgomery, James A., *JBL*, 43 (1924), 227.

usage of *lamedh* and *l'ma'an*,<sup>18</sup> but not always. In Deut. 31:29 the *lamedh* with the infinitive is correctly translated with consequential force, "provoking him to anger," but the same expression in Deut. 9:18 is translated to express purpose, "to provoke him to anger." But surely neither the Hebrews nor any other people ever committed sin in order to make their god angry.

In Exod. 26:14 (cf. 36:19 and 39:34) there is an entirely new rendering. Literally translated the verse reads "You must make tanned rams' skins as a covering for the tent, and above (that) a covering of goatskins," but in the Revised Standard Version this is rendered "And you shall make for the tent a covering of tanned rams' skins and goatskins"; i.e., there is only one covering of mixed materials and not two coverings of different materials. This interpretation, however, would seem to run counter to Hebrew syntax. If the writer had intended one covering only, he would have done as he does elsewhere; he would have used the word "covering" only once; see, e.g., Exod. 26:31, "You must make a veil of blue, purple, and scarlet material, and fine twisted linen." Here the word "veil" is not repeated; otherwise we would have had four veils, just as we have two coverings in vs. 14.

Still another oversight in the field of syntax may be noted. The revisers often fail to recognize the explicative use of the conjunction *way*,<sup>19</sup> as in Deut. 7:11, where the *way* attached to the word for "the statutes" is clearly explicative and not conjunctive. This is indicated by the fact that it is omitted in thirteen Hebrew manuscripts, in the Samaritan version, and in the same phrase in Deut. 5:31 and 6:1. In other words, "the statutes and ordinances" are explicative of "the charge," and the verse should be translated "So be careful to observe the charge, namely, the statutes and ordinances which I am enjoining on you today," and not "You shall therefore be careful to do the commandment, and the statutes, and the ordinances, which I command you today."

The Hebrew language is prodigal in its use of particles, and this gives it a vibrant note which it is quite impossible to reproduce adequately. In this the revisers have done little better than their predecessors. They have ignored many of the particles; others they render in very stilted fashion; e.g., *hinneh* appears regularly as in the earlier versions, "behold," which is assuredly not modern English.

In a translation that was the work of thirty-two scholars and an ad-

<sup>18</sup> Meek, T. J., *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 58 (1938), 127ff.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 123ff.

visory board of fifty over a period of fifteen years, one has reason to expect a finished product. Hence it is a bit shocking to find so many words in the translation which are not in the Hebrew text. Occasionally to make sense it is necessary to add a word or two in the translation, and if the revisers had done this in a passage like Exod. 29:40, reading "oil of crushed olives," which is what the Hebrew means, instead of "beaten oil," the translation would have had meaning (cf. also Exod. 31:8, "pure lampstand," which is, of course, an abbreviation for "lampstand of pure gold"). In many cases, however, the revisers add words unnecessarily; e.g., there is no "to minister" in the Hebrew of Deut. 18:7; no "said" and no "all" in Deut. 18:17; no "may eat it" in Deut. 15:22; no "in it" in Deut. 5:14.

On the other hand, there are a goodly number of words in the Hebrew which are overlooked in the translation; e.g., "all" and the preposition *kaph* are often omitted; "with her" is omitted in Gen. 3:6, and "in the lowlands" in Josh. 12:8. A very serious omission is that of "Negeb" in Exod. 26:18, apparently because it is redundant alongside of "south" and because it is incongruous with the setting of the narrative in the Sinaitic desert; but for that very reason the word should be retained, to show that the narrative is late and was composed in Palestine where the Negeb is in the south, as of course it is not if one is writing in the Sinaitic desert.

This review is by no means exhaustive. It covers only a small part of the translation, and what it does cover may not be typical of the whole. It seems strange that a group of scholars, individually of high caliber, should collectively have done so badly. The translation supposedly passed the scrutiny of eighty-two different people, and that may be the reason. In translating, as in other things, too many cooks can spoil the broth.

# George A. Gordon: Theologian of the Moral Ideal

F. GERALD ENSLEY

## 1953

IS THE CENTENNIAL YEAR of George A. Gordon (born, Inch, Scotland, January 2, 1853). To many people this fact will cause no ruffle in the pool of consciousness, but to others the name will be a sacrament of high remembrance.

Who was George A. Gordon? One of the great preachers of the last generation, for forty-two years (1884-1926) minister of the historic Old South (Congregational) Church in Boston. Dean Charles R. Brown of Yale spoke for his fellow craftsmen when he dedicated his 1922 Lyman Beecher Lectures to

George A. Gordon

Whose Preaching Kindled My Own Heart with  
Fresh Impulse during My Three Years in the  
Seminary; Who Has Nobly Maintained the Intellectual  
Dignity of the Ministry in Times of  
Stress; Who for Well-Nigh Forty Years Has  
Made the Pulpit of the Old South Church,  
Boston, a Place of Power and of Spiritual  
Impartation.

Not so well appreciated is the fact, however, that Gordon was also one of the ablest theological minds of his time. He graduated from Harvard *magna cum laude* in 1881 (though he had been admitted as a special student, because of defective preparation), taking honors in philosophy, a pupil of George Herbert Palmer and William James. He specialized in Greek as well as philosophy, winning from William Watson Goodwin, Harvard's famous classicist, the accolade of being the best student in Plato and Aristotle that he ever had. Upon graduation, President Eliot offered him a Harvard Fellowship for foreign study, with subsequent appointment to the faculty. At approximately the same time Johns Hopkins invited him to a chair of ethics. He turned his back, however, on these allurements to enter the preaching ministry of the church. (Charles W. Eliot brought

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FRANCIS GERALD ENSLEY, Ph.D., D.D., is Bishop of The Methodist Church, Des Moines Area, Des Moines, Iowa. He writes of a man who is "not only one of the great preachers of our time but a neglected theologian."

his name before the Old South Committee.) Very soon his intellectual power began to affirm itself in a high order of pulpit work. A series of thoughtful books streamed from his pen.<sup>1</sup> His church became a citadel of liberal religion.

While he was wed to his idol, the Church, the universities would not let him alone. They invited him to learned lectureships: Gordon was the first Ingersoll Lecturer at Harvard on immortality, with such distinguished philosophers as William James, Josiah Royce, George Herbert Palmer, Edgar Sheffield Brightman, and Alfred North Whitehead numbered among his successors. He gave the Nathaniel W. Taylor Lectures at Yale, a lectureship graced by such names as those of William E. Hocking, Walter Rauschenbusch, Douglas Clyde Macintosh, John Baillie, and Robert Calhoun. Of course, his preaching brought him an early invitation to the Lyman Beecher Lectureship, which not only embraces the best of the homiletical crop but enrolled such thinkers as A. M. Fairbairn, P. T. Forsyth, Dean Inge, H. H. Farmer, and Reinhold Niebuhr. That a plain parish minister should appear among such galaxies of intellectual giants is sufficient witness in itself to the respect in which his mind was held by his contemporaries. Within a dozen years one of his doughtiest orthodox foes—the moderator of his installation council who had refused to offer the installing prayer for one he deemed a heretic—confessed, “Of all the men whom I have expected to turn out badly, Gordon has disappointed me the most.”<sup>2</sup> John W. Buckham in his study of progressive religious thought calls Gordon “our third great American theologian. Jonathan Edwards, Horace Bushnell, George A. Gordon—this is the true American theological apostolic succession.”<sup>3</sup>

Gordon, however, never attained the standing among professional theologians which Buckham’s judgment would seem to warrant. For one thing, he was a parish minister all his days. He never carried a card in the theological union. He confesses in the introduction to *Revelation and the Ideal* that he had once entertained the hope of writing a philosophy of revelation but had relinquished it when he discovered the task would take “the undivided attention of a long life,” which a busy city minister could

<sup>1</sup> His books are *The Witness to Immortality* (1893), *The Christ of Today* (1895), *Immortality and the New Theodicy* (1897), *The New Epoch for Faith* (1901), *Ultimate Conceptions of Faith* (1903), *Through Man to God* (1906), *Religion and Miracle* (1909), *Revelation and the Ideal* (1913), *Aspects of the Infinite Mystery* (1916), *Humanism in New England Theology* (1920), *My Education and Religion* (1925). They all bear the imprint of Houghton Mifflin.

<sup>2</sup> One of the myriad anecdotes from one of the most delightful volumes of memoirs in print, *My Education and Religion*, p. 234.

<sup>3</sup> Buckham, J. W., *Progressive Religious Thought in America*. Houghton Mifflin, 1919, p. 87.

not give.<sup>4</sup> His theology is largely set forth in his sermons, and unless one were willing to read them in their totality—a chore a professional theologian would not likely undertake—their massive significance will be missed. His style, too, was literary rather than technical, his insights intuitive rather than inductive. In him the minutiae of research and the external paraphernalia of scholarship were lacking. For these reasons George Gordon did not draw the attention of, and is not conventionally counted among, the theologians.

Yet, a study of Gordon's writings in their entirety reveals him to be one of the strongest religious thinkers of his time. Across more than four decades he has given us *the most sustained exposition of the significance of the moral ideal in American theological writing*. For that was his central concept. What the Divine Sovereignty was to Edwards, the Incarnation to Phillips Brooks, and the Kingdom of God to Walter Rauschenbusch, the Moral Ideal was to Gordon. While his thought on the subject is served in homiletical fragments, they are broken from as mature and coherent a corpus of thought as is to be found in twentieth-century philosophy of religion. The present essay is an attempt to introduce his thought to those who have never met it and to persuade those who once read him to pick up his volumes again.

# I

The theology of George A. Gordon is an expanded syllogism:<sup>5</sup>

A. *The major premise*: "There is no way of approaching the Supreme Reality except in, and through, and by the nature of man."<sup>6</sup> Gordon is a valiant defender of what he calls "philosophic humanism": "the doctrine which finds, whether with or without clear intention, in human personality the key to the character of the universe."<sup>7</sup>

And what justification do we have for interpreting Reality in human terms? The simple fact that we cannot jump out of our own skins. There is no possibility of knowing what lies beyond us except through our own

<sup>4</sup> While Gordon acknowledged that the parish minister could never be an academic specialist, he thought that the clergyman's lack of time was compensated for by a depth of interest occasioned by the demands of his vocation. "When called upon to join in marriage exalted and happy youth, when invited to christen the child that is the rapt possession of a noble mother, when bereavement asks for light in darkness and for hope in death, the minister receives the mightiest of all incentives to find a metaphysic adequate to the quality and the ideal of normal human life. . . . How any minister can be other than a profound thinker, other than an endless metaphysician, when moved upon by the tides of human love and sacred solicitude, is something that I cannot understand." *My Education and Religion*, p. 322.

<sup>5</sup> This skeleton exposition does poor justice to the penetrating insights, and wealth of illustration, not to mention the literary and devotional power of Gordon's treatment of his theme. This is a distillate of his thought, not his own development.

<sup>6</sup> *Aspects of the Infinite Mystery*, p. 82.

<sup>7</sup> *Humanism in the New England Theology*, p. 2.



experience within us. Man must of necessity interpret his universe by using self as the interpreter. What philosophers have not always seen (one of Gordon's merits is in bringing it to light) is that "every positive view of the universe is attained under the guidance of some aspect of the personality of man used as the principle of interpretation"—whether it be the body (materialism), the life-force (vitalism), will abstracted from intelligence (fatalism), mind divested of its personal form (impersonal idealism), the individual ego (deism, Unitarianism), the family (Trinitarianism).<sup>8</sup>

The only question is which facet of human nature we shall select as our analogue of the universe. Taking as his axiom that "God must be as good as his own best work," Gordon confesses that the rock on which he built his ministry was the faith that in the Highest—rather than the lowest—we have the key to the Ultimate.<sup>9</sup> "The greatest thing that we know is man; the greatest man that we know is Jesus Christ."<sup>10</sup> We are justified, therefore, in moving, as the title of one of his books phrases it, "Through Man to God."

B. *The minor premise: The decisive fact about human nature is its pursuit of moral ideals.* By a "moral ideal" Gordon understands "the vision, according to one's light, of the supreme good, or some important aspect of it conceived under the form of privilege and obligation, and reflected in the colors and splendors of the imagination."<sup>11</sup>

There are two salient truths about the moral ideal which the famous preacher-theologian strikes with multifold illustration and forty-two years' persistence:

1. The ideal is the sovereign initiator and governor in every realm of human activity. "Nowhere in men is there any pursuit, any achievement, any experience, any desire or expectation apart from the presence and might of the ideal."<sup>12</sup> No one desires evil as evil and for its own sake. Every act, even, of perversity, sensuality, dishonor, cowardice, theft, or over-done egoism, *at the moment of choice*, seems good.<sup>13</sup>

This means that the ideal is  
the maker of character ("the deepest law of the spirit is  
that men become like what they love")<sup>14</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Humanism in the New England Theology*, p. 95. For other discussions of the point, see pp. 95-97; *Ultimate Conceptions*, pp. 376-82; *Christ of Today*, pp. 82ff; *Aspects*, pp. 82-85.

<sup>9</sup> *Education and Religion*, p. 56.

<sup>10</sup> *Through Man to God*, p. 33.

<sup>11</sup> *Aspects*, p. 172.

<sup>12</sup> *Revelation*, p. 23.

<sup>13</sup> For an illuminating discussion of motivation, see *Aspects*, pp. 41-49.

<sup>14</sup> *Revelation*, p. 422. Practically all the functions of the ideal here listed are stated in this book.

the goad to progress;  
 the renewer of moral failure;  
 the creative source of institutions (our homes, arts, government,  
 business establishments, and churches are expressions of ideals);  
 the shaper of nature and history (every human change is attributable to someone's vision of what life should be);  
 the guarantee of influence (the idealist, not the so-called realist, wields the most potent and abiding influence on his fellow-men);  
 the determiner of the future (one's ideal is the measure of his achievement here and the earnest of a life to come).

2. Moralized and Christianized, the ideal is the supreme conferrer of worth:

In every realm the ideal is the arbiter of judgment (in every act of control, selection, revision, or purification an ideal is implicit);  
 in the pursuit of ideals the self achieves the attributes of personality: unity, self-consciousness, self-determination, and freedom;  
 man's capacity for ideals wins him superior status as a species in the universe;  
 the individual doer gains worth from his ideal—the cause glorifies its servants;  
 the ideal lends meaning to the deed, sublimely to struggle and transfiguring grace even to captivity;  
 finally, the ideal not only motivates but fulfills human aspiration (in the ideal realized men find their essential satisfaction, whether they call it "success, power, character, inward peace, reconciliation with the universe, rest in the Eternal Presence").<sup>15</sup>

To sum up (1) and (2), in the concept of the moral ideal we have causal agency and value, the two great dimensions of reality, conjoined.

C. *Conclusion: If we are to think about the Ultimate it is as an Eternal Moral Idealist whose supreme revelation to us is in moral ideals.* No one, of course, is *required* to think about ultimate reality. We may remain ag-

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 245-48, 95, 423-27.

nostics, but we don't. As Gordon points out, most philosophical disbelief is really naturalism in disguise.<sup>16</sup> No serious thinker maintains a neutral pose toward reality for long; he either comes down on the idealistic side or on the other.

If we think consistently about the universe and from the premises already set forth, we are led to the notion of God as an Eternal Moral Idealist, "who entertains an infinite moral ideal, who has for it an infinite love, and who gives to it in his character an infinite fulfillment."<sup>17</sup> Since "what is ideal in man is eternal reality in God," the moral ideal "when purified by insight, exalted by wisdom, and widened by experience to the compass of the whole higher need of the soul, is nothing less, nothing other than the human version of the will of God for mankind."<sup>18</sup> Our ideals are the organs through which God reveals his intrinsic character; our loyalty to them is the process by which the Eternal invades time. Jesus Christ, as the supreme example of the Ideal, is also the supreme revelation of God. And "the glad tidings of the gospel" may be stated as "an ideal incarnation of God" in Christ "in the interest of a universal incarnation" of God in man.<sup>19</sup>

Metaphysically speaking, God is personal: "the best possible conception of God is of an ideally perfect man set free from all limitations."<sup>20</sup> The Christian term "Father" is the most adequate symbol for the Divine, since it suggests both the metaphysical and the moral sides of his nature, his Authorship of the race and his assumed obligation to stand by the creatures he has brought into being.<sup>21</sup> As to the inner economy of the Deity, Gordon is thoroughly Trinitarian, affirming that God can be the ground of man's moral life only if his innermost life is essentially social, an eternal family.<sup>22</sup>

The moral idealism of God—and man—assures a moral outcome in time and beyond. Because of the origin of things in the divine will, the fact of historic human advancement, the firsthand experience by the idealist of moral victory in himself, we may be hopeful of progress—"the increasing attainment of a worthy and desirable end"<sup>23</sup>—for humanity. On similar grounds, the infinity implied in moral experience (Kant's argument) and

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *Immortality and the New Theodicy*, p. 19; *Ultimate Conceptions*, pp. 375-76.

<sup>17</sup> *Through Man to God*, p. 85; cf. also *Aspects*, pp. 91-92, 200.

<sup>18</sup> *Through Man to God*, p. 33.

<sup>19</sup> *New Epoch for Faith*, p. 128.

<sup>20</sup> *Ultimate Conceptions*, p. 365. Though Gordon often employs the term "personality," his most frequent designation is "the humanity of God," presumably because it is more compatible with his view of the Trinity.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *Aspects*, pp. 93, 94, for an excellent statement of the meaning of Fatherhood in God.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *Ultimate Conceptions*, pp. 364ff.

<sup>23</sup> From a sermon preached January 25, 1925, "Is Progress a Delusion?" See Gordon, *Let Us Reason Together*, p. 32.

a moral God, we may believe in personal continuity beyond death. A God who would bring men into being, lure them with the vision of a noble ideal, and then, their expectations raised, sentence them summarily to death, would be not "the Infinite Perfection but the Infinite Cannibal."<sup>24</sup> The honor of the responsible Author of our being requires a future life. "I am as sure of immortality," Gordon testifies, "as I am of the Fatherhood of God."<sup>25</sup>

## II

One's first reaction to Gordon's doctrine might be not unlike that attributed to the chap who read *Macbeth* for the first time, "That Shakespeare fellow has a lot of my ideas!" The moral argument is not new: it is the road down which religious philosophy has marched generally since Kant. Nevertheless, there are a number of characteristics which distinguish Gordon's approach, within the broad liberal tradition within which he moved.

To begin with, the moral argument for God has elsewhere been largely from the *form* of morality; *Gordon argues from its content*. Kant was confessedly a formalist, contending that the structure of moral experience has theistic implications. Sorley's masterful *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, a noble modern representative of the valuational approach, likewise lays stress on the theoretical. He argues from values *per se*, as a system of ontological entities pointing to a personalistic world view. Brightman's brilliant *Philosophy of Ideals* gets its leverage from an epistemological analysis. Gordon arrives at the same destination but proceeds from the empirical considerations, men's day-to-day experience with ideals as he observes them in the pastor's confessional, from the pulpit, from his reading of literature and history. He does not move to the theistic position from the fact *that* men have ideals—the post-Kantian way—but from *what* ideals they cherish.

Gordon's thought is further marked by an *inner consistency* wanting in some others who take the valuational approach. That Kant never got the pure and the practical reason completely reconciled is one of the standard criticisms of the great Königsberger. Ritschl never quite bridged his distinction between existential and value judgments: in his followers his theology always threatened to slip over the precipice into illusionism. The cleft between "is" and "ought" yawns in many expositions of contemporary liberal thought, leaving God and immortality valiant hopes, articles of faith, rather than firmly grounded realities. Gordon is distin-

<sup>24</sup> *Religion and Miracle*, p. 213.

<sup>25</sup> *Aspects*, p. 95.

guished by the amazing coherence of his system. The ideal and the real are of one piece with him: starting from the experience of ideals as one of the most intimate and certain realities that we possess, a reality to which even the hard facts of nature are subservient, he moves with remorseless logic to a Christian world view. The tenacious manner in which he holds to his basic principles and the wealth of ingenuity expended in illustrating them—variety of detail supporting identity of thought—across forty years of theological writing, and the unity to which he attains, has few peers in American philosophy of religion.

One of the timeless stories associated with Gordon's name concerns the first Board of Preachers at Harvard University, which he shared with Phillips Brooks, Edward Everett Hale, Alexander McKenzie, and Francis Peabody. Brooks and Hale were preachers of national repute, Gordon a young man, just beginning. When each came to sign the "Ministers Book" indicating the number of student interviews he had had, Brooks listed one hundred, Hale eighty, Peabody sixty, and McKenzie thirty. Gordon's entry read, "I have had during my term of service two, and only two callers; one inquired the way to the Bursar's Office, and the other the way to the Kingdom of Heaven." His distinction in his theology, too, is the skillful fashion in which he kept the actualities of this world and the Kingdom of Heaven together!

Once more, Gordon's version of the moral argument differs from others not only in its ultra-empirical approach and its inner coherence, but by its *practical purpose*. He calls his Beecher Lectures a "working theology."<sup>26</sup> In him the theologian's head is always conjoined with the pastor's heart. He is interested not only in the truth but *in the truth that will do some human being good*. This is not to despise the speculative intellect. On the contrary, he indicts those who, out of pragmatic considerations, disparage the intellectual. "It is a poor thing," he cries, "to represent the intellect as a petty farmer going to his hencoop in the morning for his egg for breakfast."<sup>27</sup>

Still, thought is never an end in itself for Gordon. He is interested in the thought that makes a difference to human life. "To say of certain doctrines that they cannot be preached is from my point of view a complete confession of their worthlessness."<sup>28</sup>

The speculative thinker moves in a circle about a single center, the

<sup>26</sup> *Ultimate Conceptions*, p. xi.

<sup>27</sup> *Revelation*, p. 73.

<sup>28</sup> *Ultimate Conceptions*, p. 25.

truth, *per se*. The preacher's work is an ellipse with two foci, the truth and the practical need of men. When Gordon comes to dedicate his *Ultimate Conceptions of Faith*, it is to his fellow ministers "whose vocation it will be in an age of transition to form the mind in Christian beliefs and to shape the life in Christian righteousness." The academic theologian is interested in the validity of the beliefs; the preacher of the Gordon type sees the beliefs not only in their intrinsic truth but in their instrumental worth in shaping the life of man in Christian righteousness. This noble utilitarianism marks off the Old South pastor from many professional theologians.

Once more, would it be fair to say that Dr. Gordon differs from some other interpreters of the moral argument in *his superior literary expression*? Here is a man who not only used to tell his intimates that he devoted his hard reading in the winter to Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, turning to Plato's *Dialogues* for his lighter summer reading, but one whose lectures on the poets—Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning—charmed Boston's literary elite at the turn of the century. He was as much at home with the masters of the writing art as with the giants of reflection. The consequences were that he carried into his expositions of theology all the graces of literary excellence. Kant's argument for immortality in the second Book of the *Critique of the Practical Reason* is probably as true as Gordon's moving sermon on the same theme from Luke 24:29, "It is toward evening, and the day is far spent."<sup>29</sup> But what a difference in beauty of expression! Gordon's theology is not unlike his native Scottish moors when the heather is in bloom; the flinty rock of logic is there, but mantled in the dignity and winsomeness of graceful speech.

Gordon once observed in an essay on President Eliot that the Harvard educator was not original in the sense of producing the absolutely new. But he went on to say that "whoever gives an idea greater depth, vitality, scope, availability, and effective power must stand forth as an original mind and character."<sup>30</sup> In this sense Gordon, like Eliot, was amazingly original; the conventional moral argument came forth with the stamp of Gordon's individuality upon it.

### III

One of the stories that brought a Gordon chuckle concerned the candi-

<sup>29</sup> Cf. *Through Man to God*, pp. 329-346. Gordon says of Kant, "He is the patron saint of bad writers. To get himself understood, he has wasted more of this world's precious time than perhaps any other recorded thinker in European history. We put him down as an essential friend, but one whose manners provoke impatience, indignation, sometimes even profanity." *Education and Religion*, p. 259

<sup>30</sup> *Education and Religion*, pp. 295-96.



date for civil service who was asked if he knew how far the sun was from the earth. "Not exactly," he replied, "but I know that it is far enough away not to interfere in the performance of my duties in the customhouse!" Do these speculations of Gordon's have any bearing on our present situation? I believe that there are four points at which he is still relevant as a thinker:

1. *He is working at the crucial theological problem of our time*, as it was of his, *the relation of metaphysics to morality*. Gordon early took as his mission in life to resolve the contradiction in the old New England theology between the divine nature and the divine decrees, between a Being of absolute love and One who practically consigned the greater portion of his children to everlasting perdition. There is now, as when Gordon began, a hiatus in theological thinking between the Ultimate and moral experience. On the right, in the Continental theologians, we find the conception of a transcendent, allegedly righteous God, mated with a nonmoral view of sin. (Emil Brunner, for instance, teaches that "in the last resort the fact of being or not being a sinner has nothing to do with the difference between the morally good and the morally evil.")<sup>31</sup> On the left the humanists try to get along with morality divested of metaphysical support. In between are all the vagaries of popular religion which exalt emotionalism, therapeutics, or Bible-worship above the moral law. In contrast Gordon's theology sounds the note of moral idealism as the heart of Christianity and the Christian metaphysics as the lifeblood of it. The most urgent problem of our time is to keep Christian belief and Christian righteousness together. Whether we acknowledge Gordon's remedy, at least he is speaking to our condition.

2. *He forges a synthesis*, which every generation must effect, *between the Greek and Christian traditions*, between the claims of moral intelligence and the revelation of God and duty which came with Christ. The Christian tradition is here, still a potent ingredient of our culture. Men also have minds and consciences. To attempt to deny the claims of either Jerusalem or Athens is not merely to impoverish but to condemn our civilization to sterility and ultimate death. Gordon was at home in both traditions. While he facetiously referred to Aristotle as his assistant pastor, Jesus Christ was always his Lord. He brought together these two mighty interests of man—moral intelligence and divine revelation—in three ways:

<sup>31</sup> *Man in Revolt*, p. 154. Quoted, A. C. Knudson, *Basic Issues in Christian Thought*. The Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1950, p. 111.

First, he fastened on the idea of the good as common to both traditions, and, as we have seen, made it central in his own thinking.<sup>32</sup>

Secondly, he borrowed the fundamental concept of the Hebraic-Christian tradition, divine revelation, and filled it with moral content. God *does* take the initiative; God *does* reveal. But what? His own ideals for the race. And how? Through our best ideals.<sup>33</sup>

Thirdly, he argued that Jesus Christ, the highest Christian revelation, is also the *summum bonum* of moral intelligence.<sup>34</sup>

3. *He offers a justification for religious education in a disillusioned age.* It is not hard to convince oneself that Christian ideals are futile in the face of the terrifying forces of our time. Why not give up our hopeless attempts at religious nurture and go in for social work, mass indoctrination, governmental control, or even power politics? Are not these the decisive forces of our generation? To which comes the heartening response of this noble Christian thinker: "The ends for which men live are visions." "Nowhere in man is there any achievement, any experience, any desire or expectation, apart from the presence and might of the ideal." "Human nature was made to be swayed, satisfied, and saved by the vision of the supreme good; when truly presented and truly beheld, the supreme good is irresistible in its power over the human soul."<sup>35</sup> The awful forces unleashed in our time, far from witnessing against ideals, are thundering affidavits to their potency. They show what ideals—albeit perverse ideals—can do. These pagan ideals have the ultimate weight of the universe against them, however. When the children of light become as wise in their way as the children of darkness, and when the loyalty of Christians to Christ matches the devotion of the pagans to their Führers, we shall have a fairer world. Our contemporary crisis is a charter and a challenge to more effective character education.<sup>36</sup>

4. *Finally, Gordon enunciates the premise of theological reconstruction in our time: the use of personality in its highest form as the principle*

<sup>32</sup> "The idea of the good is the common possession of Greek philosophy as represented by Plato and Aristotle, and the Old and New Testaments." *Aspects*, p. vii.

<sup>33</sup> His dedication of *Revelation and the Ideal*: "I dedicate this book to those who believe that the ideal is the shadow of God in the mind of man."

<sup>34</sup> "The gospel of Jesus is the sovereign version of the *summum bonum* for man." *Education and Religion*, p. 249.

<sup>35</sup> *Revelation*, pp. 278, 231; *Education*, p. 249.

<sup>36</sup> It is worthy of note that Gordon anticipated by a third of a century the strategy which Alfred North Whitehead and Sir Richard Livingstone have been preaching: the exposure of youth to ideals by the study of moral heroes. (Cf. Whitehead, *The Aims of Education*, Macmillan, 1929, and Livingstone, *On Education*, Macmillan, 1945.) For Gordon's discussion of this method, which probably he as well as Whitehead and Livingstone acquired from their mentor, Plato, see *Education and Religion*, pp. 160ff.; *Revelation and the Ideal*, pp. 189ff.; *Ultimate Conceptions of Faith*, pp. 286ff.; *Aspects of the Infinite Mystery*, pp. 121ff.; *Ultimate Victory*, pp. 47-58.

*of cosmic interpretation.*<sup>37</sup> One of these days it may occur to us, even to our neo-orthodox brethren, that if we are going to think about God we must do it in human terms, for the simple reason that that is the only way men can think. The human mind can only speak of the Ultimate either negatively or analogically. Our option is a personalistic theology—in the broadest sense—or no theology. If we elect to be theologians, we have a further choice between the highest in humanity or something lower as the clue. In his first serious volume on theology Gordon declared John 14:9 to be the norm for theology in his time: "He that hath seen me"—the noblest expression of the moral ideal known to human history—"hath seen the Father."<sup>38</sup> We suspect it to be the creative principle of our age as well!

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. *Humanism in the New England Theology*, pp. 2, 95.

<sup>38</sup> *Christ of Today*, p. 178.

# Can Strong Men Pray?

GEORGE C. VINCENT

## I

SOME STRONG MEN DO PRAY. There is reliable evidence that both Lincoln and Washington did, at least occasionally. But there is in many minds a suspicion that most strong men feel that they should go ahead and do the best they can, trust in God, and let it go at that. Prayer seems useless, or an impertinence, or an attempt to avoid responsibility and shift the load to God.

Immanuel Kant thought almost any man would be embarrassed to be found on his knees in prayer. Clarence Day, of *Life With Father* fame, has a famous description of the prayers of the older Mr. Day. "I never saw Father kneel in supplication. On the contrary, he talked with God lying in bed. I would hear him call 'God! Oh, God!' as though he were demanding that God present himself instantly and be admonished. Then when Father seemed to feel that God was listening he would begin to expostulate. 'Oh, God, it's too much. Amen. I say it's too damn much. I can't stand it. Amen.' Sometimes he would ferociously bark a few extra Amens, and then, soothed and satisfied, go peacefully back to sleep." The elder Mr. Day felt that religion "had its own proper field of activity, and it was all right there; but there was one place religion should let alone, and that was a man's soul. He specially loathed any talk of walking hand in hand with his Savior." That is probably merely an outspoken statement of what is secretly in many strong men's minds.

Recently a prominent Eastern church found itself without a pastor. A committee was appointed to make recommendations, and in due course a church meeting was called to hear their nomination. The report was read, discussed, and adopted. Only after the meeting had adjourned did it even occur to anyone that they had neither asked Divine guidance in the delibera-

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tions, nor asked God's blessing on the man of their choice. Yet these were good men and strong men. Why didn't they pray?

There is nothing unusual about this incident. The Gospel stories tell us that Christ found the same condition among his disciples. While he was praying on a mountain top, they were trying at the foot of the mountain to heal a lunatic boy. They failed and asked Christ for the reason. He said, "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." They had not prayed. Yet these were good men, even strong men. At least they had had enough courage to "leave all" and follow Jesus.

Why this reluctance to pray?

The familiar and obvious answer that we haven't time is surely a camouflage of a deeper difficulty. In the long pull we usually do what we want to do, and what we believe is worth doing, or what dominant habit compels us to do. Probably the excuse of "no time" merely means that we are so engrossed in life's demanding detail, and of our part in and contribution to the process, that it is only by a great effort that we can recall ourselves to remember the greater forces with which we work and which ultimately must be more decisive than anything we alone can do. We bend to the oars, but forget the wind and the tide. Yet this immersion in details is an almost inevitable part of our finite human situation. It is intensified by the transition from an agricultural civilization to an industrial age. We are more and more aware of our machines, less and less of God's weather.

A second factor which helps account for prayerlessness, is some sense of shame born of the realization of how poorly we present ourselves and our situation to God. I once knew a man who was both the head of a great industry and a very good Christian. His wife told me that he still knelt beside his bed every night and said the prayer of his childhood, "Now I lay me." He never talked openly about prayer. He was half ashamed of the inadequacy of his custom. It was a good gesture, and he was sure the Lord understood; but he also felt that as a grown man he should be capable of more significant expression.

A third factor is probably the climate of mechanistic philosophy which still lingers in the background of our minds, however fully we may have rejected it as an open and avowed creed. We meet this often in the writings of popular journalists and even in our better thinkers in social sciences. They still talk of "social trends" and "forces" as being stronger than the individual, without emphasizing that these trends and forces are made up of the attitudes and reactions of many individuals, and thus ultimately are under the control of individuals acting separately or in groups. Here, in

this half conscious mechanistic outlook, is a habit of mind obviously hostile to that fine encounter of mind with greater mind which is the essence of prayer.

Behind and beyond all this surely stands the all but inevitable self-consciousness and self-assertiveness of the human individual which many people consider the root of all evil. It is intensified in men of strength and responsibility. Mr. Day felt that he was a hard-working citizen, doing his part and often more. It did not seem to him sometimes that God quite did his share. That may be a rather ridiculous idea when we state it baldly, but it is very natural. It is a serious intensification of the common tendency of the human individual to ignore God. This love of standing on our own feet and feeling that we are doing things ourselves is probably the deepest and most ineradicable root of prayerlessness.

## II

But to say that the neglect of prayer is natural and understandable is not to say that it is acceptable as a persistent human habit. Plato talked of the noble possibilities of the human mind to become a "spectator of all time and all existence," and Aristotle insisted that the "unexamined life" is fit only for animals or slaves. We all know with some inner shame how easily we become the slaves of impulse, appetite, or circumstance. We all are aware of how much of our days is passed almost on the animal level. And we aren't proud of it. We would like to think that we have a well-considered point of view, that we know where we are going and why, that our opinions are free from emotional bias and our conduct from prejudice. But we know that it isn't so, and that a lot of the trouble in families and in great societies springs from this fact. We are desperately in need of the disciplines which would lift us to nobler and more judicial points of view, and give us the zest and courage to put them into effect. Obviously one of our greatest helps at this point would come from familiar association with a mind broader, juster, and more generous than our own.

There is a special urgency about all this at the present time because of the great physical resources that are at our disposal, and which we are terribly tempted to use for the satisfaction of some rather low instinct or desire. The atomic bomb is only a dramatic illustration of the power which is almost at the finger tips of all of us. Our need is for direction. What to do with our power? To what end direct it? Where better can that sense of direction be gained than from association with a mind noble and artistic, which uses material things for beautiful and humanitarian ends?



There is another special point at which we need the help of prayer: the political situation in the modern world. The relations of East and West, of Communist and free world, are difficult to the point of being packed with peril. We are anxious to bring about better understandings with Asia and to help the freedom-loving people enslaved behind the iron curtain. But we are baffled, fearful that any move we make may make the situation worse rather than better. In such a predicament, prayer, if it is effective at all, presents a peculiarly valuable approach. The good Lord knows us and our desires. He also knows those other people as we cannot possibly know their situation. If prayer means a release of Divine power, as we have every reason to believe it does, then the offering of our hopes and desires to God in prayer will bring about the release of the most wise and beneficent powers for the help of those whom we are too weak and ignorant to help ourselves. The course of history is notoriously unpredictable. Equally impressive and suggestive is the way that moral and spiritual forces show themselves influential in stirring men's hopes and directing their conduct. We should make use of this in the political situation.

It may be well to remind ourselves of two facts which easily slip from our minds. The first is that it is not true, as we readily think, that God is far off and little known. His mind is in many ways the mind we know best in all the world. That is not saying too much. We never know any mind as well as we would like—not our own—and not that of our wives. How often we are amazed and aghast at the thoughts and passions which rise within ourselves. And women are a perpetual surprise to men. But our knowledge of God is untroubled by these disconcerting discoveries. He is completely reliable. And in many ways we know him well. He is in nature and in human nature. He is in the laws of light and of gravitation. Equally he is in the laws of logic and in the appeal of the moral judgment which we use every hour. He is in the golden rule and the law of service, so surprisingly fundamental to all our social life. We know him strangely well—better than we know any other mind, and that despite our finitude. It is possible, desirable, and ennobling to meet him in conference, and to share inspiration and release of power back and forth.

The second fact which we easily forget is that prayer is by no means an impertinent attempt to "change the mind of God." Unless all signs fail, we have to do in our dealings with God with a Being of profoundly and superbly personal quality. The talk of God as "an impersonal force of love" is obviously almost a contradiction in terms, however well meant the phrase may be. Love, in the proper sense, only exists in and proceeds from

persons. And there are some special, dependable, but little studied processes which belong to the interplay of mind with other mind. "Iron sharpeneth iron. So a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." There is an unquestionable release and heightening of the powers of the mind and moral nature in the meeting of two strong men of somewhat similar outlook. This stimulation will aid physical health and power. Experiments made with the aid of hypnosis have been rather startling. The release of power in "team work" is a familiar mystery.

This process involves no breach of "law." Rather it is evidence of a most law-abiding tendency which operates inevitably and irresistibly in human and all other personal relationships. If God is "personal" this process operates in him as well as in us, and Divine power is released and enhanced when strong men share their hopes and needs with God. Things happen and develop as never would be the case if there were not this meeting, sharing, and releasing. The needy world waits for prayer. The Bible warns us against making God in our own image. A more pertinent warning for our times would be against making God a machine or an impersonal force.

A simple, honest presentation of need has a stimulating effect in the dealings of men with one another. Remember how Richard Cobden, John Bright, and Tom Hood were moved and inspired to do something for the poor of England when brought face to face with the lives and pitiful needs of people in the great industrial towns. It wasn't statistics. It was face-to-face contact with simple, homely, personal need. Well, surely we have needs that would stir compassion in any heart. We can bring those needs to God personally, not as mere generalizations; and can we doubt that the springs of generosity will be released? Is there not something like a law of the workings of personality which is operative here? What kind of Being is this who enfolds the universe if he will not be stirred and inspired by such contact? "Shall not the Lord avenge his elect who cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?"

### III

Since the practice of prayer is so noble in itself, so greatly needed in the world today, and so well calculated to bring important results, it seems important to overcome our reluctance and make prayer a constant part of life. The difficulties are considerable and not easily overcome. They are concealed. They lie in wait for us in the dark. They lurk in the "sub-conscious."

Something can be done unquestionably by frontal attack—simply by bringing the reasons of difficulty out into the open and setting them over against the great and noble possibilities of communion and intercession.

We can weaken and perhaps break the subconscious associations of prayer with feelings of embarrassment by changing some outward customs. It is not necessary to get down on our knees to pray, however helpful the habit may be to the common prayers of a congregation. Daniel is described as praying looking out the window, and Jesus as lying prone on the ground. For the purpose of breaking old associations and establishing a new appreciation of prayer it may be a wise policy, for a time, to pray when walking the floor, or sitting at a desk with a pencil in one's hand, or in whatever attitude or situation will most readily suggest the sharing and conference of mind with other mind. A lot of important people had conferences with General Eisenhower during the autumn of 1952 which presumably released and strengthened energies both ways. How did men prepare for these conferences, and how were they conducted? Answers to such questions might be helpful in suggesting new techniques for prayer, at least in its outward forms.

Notoriously we are dependent on groups of people who share common moral attitudes and customs for developing our own characteristics. The old Hartshorne and May studies in the development of character are emphatic at this point. "Prayer groups" are not fashionable among men of strong character. Yet the need for some wisely conceived equivalent is obvious.

Some study of the order and organization of our thoughts in the act of prayer seems particularly promising. The disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray. He gave them what he and they apparently understood as an outline for the ordering of thoughts. We have changed it into a "form" of prayer—and often have lost its value as a considered recommendation by a great master as to the sequence of ideas and mental attitudes which may be suitable and helpful in prayer.

He begins with appreciation and aspiration for fuller understanding and wider recognition: "Father—hallowed be thy name"! The whole idea that the life, mind, and process behind the universe is related to us as a father to a child opens the way to a lot of fruitful speculation and warm appreciation of a great deal that goes on in life. It implies steady appreciation on God's part of our situation and possibilities; a certain aloofness and absence of intrusion, coupled with rich provision for our needs; a vast and nobly conceived educational process which uses situations instead of words;

a steady and pursuing affection. A man could use a good many minutes reflecting on this sort of thing, and wishing sincerely that it were more widely appreciated, and emerge considerably strengthened in his own mind, purified in his emotional attitudes, and quite certain that he had released processes in the life of the world that would be definitely beneficent, softening man's harsh embitterments, giving a lift to his heart and his hopes.

The prayer goes forward with reflection on and aspiration for a social order: "Thy Kingdom come." The phrasing is provocative. The personal pronoun refers us back to "fatherhood" and a quality of life. The word "Kingdom" suggests a rule or law. There is plenty of evidence that the spirit of "fatherliness" is basic to all good social life. It is a biological necessity if little children are to survive. It is an educational necessity if our cultural heritage is to be passed on. And it is an economic necessity if the law of "supply and demand" means meeting human need. Yet as free spirits we can and do ignore this basic law. How appropriate, then, to pray that the spirit of fatherliness become operative and dominant in society.

The "will" of God comes next: "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." This petition stimulates thought, arouses hopes, and radically affects our planning. The thought of "will" operating behind the universe has rich and disconcerting implications. It summons us to bestir ourselves as we rarely do. It well may carry a hint of warning.

Our relationship to and dependence upon the physical order, its organization and the purposes for which it is designed, constitute the next topic: "Give us this day our daily bread." Few matters are in greater need of clarification, wise understanding and right action than this subject of our relation to the physical basis of life and the material aspect of the universe. Sick people need guidance, poor people need help, and those in positions of power over material forces and supplies greatly need direction, humility, and insight. The infusion of the ideas of this prayer into matters of "daily bread" might well release forces that would transform our worlds of economics and communications, and affect processes of healing.

The period marked for recognition of our moral needs is really a double one. "Forgive us our debts." "Lead us not into temptation." The farther we go in the lines of thought outlined for our prayers, the more we recognize how crucial are our difficulties in this area. We are distracted and tempted people—bitterly so. Sometimes the torment of our condition is so great that nothing seems to compensate for the evil we do to ourselves, to God, and to our fellows in society. Our passions, our ignorance, our prejudice, our clumsiness in carrying out even our best intentions become

an intolerable handicap and reproach to us. Even the thought of God's vast educational process cannot quiet our bitter regrets. We cannot forgive ourselves for our blundering, nor other men for their wrongdoing, not even God himself for having made us the way we are and set us in so difficult a world. We are full of resentments. Yet these very resentments are themselves our enemies. This embitterment can cause us to destroy ourselves and the whole plan and work of God. We long to be washed clean of the whole business, and we turn to the vast, pure, serene mind of God as the one place and the only fellowship in which this utterly desirable cleansing operation can take place.

The familiar conclusion of the prayer with an affirmation of faith: "Thine is the kingdom and the power," is an obviously suitable movement of thought to round out our period of communion. After giving expression to need, it is psychologically steadying and releasing to remember that God isn't too disturbed by our situation. He is perfectly competent to deal with it.

A man turns from this or any other review of our practices in the matter of prayer with an almost despairing doubt as to whether we ever can so master our human weaknesses as to take advantage of the opportunity which stands like an open door invitingly before us. Granting everything that has been said or might be said—will men pray? Probably that doubt is itself simply the reflection of our own knowledge that we haven't prayed and probably never will pray as we might. We need faith; faith and resolution. Did not Jesus speak of a "grain of mustard seed?"

But there is a special basis for ultimate confidence. Most men covet the opportunity to talk things over with a wise, judicial, and executive mind. A good many vigorous and independent men in Athens enjoyed the talk of Socrates. The able men of the colonies wore a path to Mount Vernon in the years between Yorktown and the adoption of the Constitution, eager to talk things over with Washington, draw inspiration from his wisdom, and strength from his power and influence. Surely, a greater than Socrates or Washington is here! If that is remembered, strong men may find the happiest and most refreshing moments of their lives in his company. He, on his part, may turn thousands to his brave new world.



# The Main Types of Existentialism

OSWALD O. SCHRAG

ACCORDING TO Jean Wahl it is the contention of Heidegger and Sartre that existentialism defies any definition.<sup>1</sup> It stands for the meaning *that* existence is, and it rejects the theory that man has available adequate instruments of knowledge to reduce existence to *what it is*. Thus existentialism is applied to the field of epistemology in much the same way that the Heisenberg principle of indeterminacy pertains to the field of metaphysics. Those who accept this extreme position maintain that no words can do justice to a definition of existentialism because the use of words in a definition is already an attempt to give the essence of an idea or thing, whereas existentialism is the concept that existence precedes essence.

Existentialists and non-existentialists alike can accept the belief that life is deeper than any theory about it, but the existentialists claim to take the "something deeper" more seriously. "We *SPEAK* of the philosophy of existence; this is precisely what Heidegger, and Sartre as well, would like to avoid, since we are concerned with questions which, strictly speaking, belong to solitary meditation and cannot be subjects of discourse."<sup>2</sup>

The writer can agree that there is something stubborn and irreducible about existence, that not without difficulty can existence be reduced to the rational as the idealists would have it, nor to sense experience as the positivists would have it, nor to nature or neutral entities as the naturalists and neo-realists attempt to do, nor to the "wholly other" as some theologians would have us believe. But an approach to give meaning to existence by concerning oneself with questions that belong to solitary meditation and cannot be subjects of discourse, is an invitation to irrationalism and agnosticism, both of which are contradictory to the philosophical spirit.

## I. DEFINITION OF EXISTENTIALISM

To make existentialism more intelligible one must proceed to define

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<sup>1</sup> Wahl, J., *A Short History of Existentialism*, tr. Forest Williams, Stanley Maron. The Philosophical Library, 1949, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

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it positively as well as negatively. Existentialism is an attempt to evaluate existence by considering the whole of human experience with special emphasis on the private and deeply personal experiences of man. Existential thinking is a deep personal concern about the mystery of one's being, including especially the problem of freedom, suffering, and death. It is more concerned about human existence than existence in general. Helmut Kuhn describes existentialism as "a thinking animated and supported by the personal life of the thinker," "that school of thought which undertakes to incorporate the trial of suffering in its philosophical and theological structure," "a philosophy which tries to win certainty through despair."<sup>3</sup>

One of the main characteristics of existentialism is that of subjectivity. It is once again a positing of the egocentric predicament. It is asserted that in thinking about reality the philosopher can never carry on his quest in the relationship of an onlooker to a picture. The thinker is always a part of reality and he cannot set aside himself or nature as something to be observed without receiving a distorted view of both.<sup>4</sup> The subject can never completely become object. "I cannot make an affirmation about my being without breaking into it, dividing it, and thus I am at a point of betraying it."<sup>5</sup>

In the writings of Sartre, subjectivity is the first principle of existentialism. He defines existentialism as "a doctrine which makes human life possible and, in addition, declares that every truth and every action implies a human setting and a human subjectivity."<sup>6</sup> For Sartre the essential meaning of existentialism is that it is impossible for man to transcend human subjectivity.

The common ground upon which both atheistic and Christian existentialists can agree is that subjectivity is the starting point, and this is to say that existence precedes essence. For Sartre this means that man first of all exists, appears on the scene in the midst of changing nature and society, and only afterwards does he define himself.

The insistence upon the priority of existence over essence has led to the criticism of classical philosophies. The classical philosophers were concerned with essence, with the "what" instead of the "that." In their

<sup>3</sup> Kuhn, H., "Existentialism—Christian and anti-Christian." *Theology Today*, vol. 6, No. 3, 1949, pp. 311-317.

<sup>4</sup> Marcel, G., *The Philosophy of Existence*, tr. Many Harari. The Philosophical Library, 1949, p. 95

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Sartre, J.-P., *Existentialism*, tr. Bernard Frechtman. The Philosophical Library, 1947, p. 12.

thinking about reality they severed themselves from it and lost contact with it. The existentialists say that reality must be something more than our ideas about it, it must be more than the objects we experience; essences are not existents, the that is prior to the what.<sup>7</sup> Werner Brock, interpreting Heidegger's *Postscript*, writes: "'Being,' and its 'truth,' was long before men came into their own by thinking it. Essential thinking, i.e., true philosophy, meditating upon 'Being,' is an 'event of Being' itself."<sup>8</sup>

The recognition of the private and deeply personal in existential thought also finds expression in Nels F. S. Ferré's definition of existentialism. "The existential is individual, deeply inward. It is the decision where the martyr must face death rather than deny or recant."<sup>9</sup>

Existential thinking includes depth decisions which cannot be made wholly on the basis of previous experience or speculative morality, but that involve a trust in which, ideally, passions, will, and intellect co-operate. Existential thinking, "whole thinking," and "depth thinking" are used synonymously by Ferré. Whole thinking "requires the deepest passions, as well as intellect and will, of the whole man."<sup>10</sup> Man continuously attempts to comprehend and to explain his experience and the experience of others, but his deepest searchings and thought still leaves much shrouded in mystery. Man's deepest needs outrun his best ideas. This kind of depth thinking is existential thinking. It means "that the whole person is involved critically and costingly in the thinking."<sup>11</sup> Whole response, unavoidable, critical, and personal are the words which characterize the existential most adequately. Walter Horton approximates such a description of the existential when he defines genuine faith as

*a trustful reaching out of the whole man*—not his mind alone, but his will and emotions too, with a "whole-heartedness" that involves even the bodily organism, right down to the tear ducts and the pit of the stomach—toward something he may find it hard to define, *but which he honestly considers more trustworthy than himself*, more trustworthy than his wife or friends, . . . a bank account, . . . or any of those other liabilities in which men customarily put their trust.<sup>12</sup>

One of the most inclusive definitions of existentialism in which the existential is contrasted with the non-existential is given by Nicolas Berdyaev. They differ in:

<sup>7</sup> Ferm, V., "The New Fad in Philosophy and Theology." *Croner Quarterly*, vol. 27 (1950), pp. 193-199.

<sup>8</sup> Heidegger, M., *Existence and Being*. Henry Regnery Company, 1949, p. 239.

<sup>9</sup> Ferré, N. F. S., *Faith and Reason*. Harper and Brothers, 1946, p. 150.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>12</sup> Horton, W. M., *Our Christian Faith*. The Pilgrim Press, 1945, p. xviii.

(1) The primacy of freedom over being or the primacy of being over freedom, that is the first and the most important; (2) The primacy of the existential subject over the objectified world or the primacy of the objectified world over the existential subject; (3) dualism or monism; (4) voluntarism or intellectualism; (5) dynamism or statism; (6) creative activism or passive observation; (7) personalism or impersonalism; (8) anthropologism or cosmism; (9) philosophy of the spirit or naturalism. These principles may be combined differently in different systems. I decidedly choose the philosophy that affirms the primacy of freedom over being, of the existential subject over the objectified world, dualism, voluntarism, dynamism, creative activism, personalism, anthropologism, and the philosophy of the Spirit.<sup>13</sup>

From the various attempts at a definition it can be observed that the common characteristics of both Christian and atheistic existentialism are: (1) the view that existence precedes essence (2) reason is denied the power to give a coherent account of reality (3) the emphasis on subjectivity in which the vitally personal, the individual, decision and commitment are all-important for an interpretation of reality.

To do justice to both types of existentialism the following definition is presented: existentialism, in contrast to speculative thought which primarily stresses objectivity in the sense of the rational and universal, is thinking that is more concerned with the structure and destiny of human being than with being in general. It is thinking of human experience in terms of voluntarism, the subjective, and the inescapable deeply personal decisions and commitments. It asserts that ultimately in every mental and physical event there is more meaning than can be expressed in a human rationale.

The two types of existentialism have come to a parting of the ways at the point of interpretation of the ultimate meaning of existence, and especially with respect to the fact of suffering and evil. The atheistic school can give no meaning to existence apart from the meaning which human persons give to it. Reality, it is believed, is not reducible to the rationally coherent and therefore there is no basis for speaking of the essence of a thing or human nature. Contrary to this view, Vergilius Ferm aptly points out that such Christian thinkers as Étienne Gilson and Jacques Maritain "talk about a superessential existentialism which is God, a That which is descriptively beyond all reason, a That which becomes a What in the encounter through revelation alone and not through thought."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *ya i mir obyektov*, p. 25, tr. and cited by Matthew Spinka, *Nicolas Berdyaev: Captive of Freedom*. The Westminster Press, 1950, p. 99.

<sup>14</sup> Ferm, V., *op. cit.*

## II. ATHEISTIC EXISTENTIALISM

Sartre warns that his existentialism is not to be confused with the Christian type. He accepts a creation *ex nihilo*, but it is man who is the creator. God, a pattern of human nature, and purpose in the universe, are concepts which have no place in his thinking. Man appears on the scene, he exists, he is the master of his own fate and destiny. Man is indefinable because at first he is nothing.<sup>15</sup> The forlornness and anguish that man experiences mean only that God does not exist and that we have to face all the consequences of this. (For a thinker of the Barthian type such as Emil Brunner, anguish and unrest are the result of man's falling away from God and falling into self-love. It is the realization of the wrath of God.<sup>16</sup>)

Sartre denies that his view is pessimistic. On the contrary, he says, it calls for optimism and real responsibility. Life has no meaning until you give it reality, and "value is nothing else but the meaning you choose."<sup>17</sup> The theists, declares Sartre, escape this terrible responsibility by giving values a cosmic rather than a human source, and thereby making men live in a false freedom and with a lack of responsibility. There is no escape—man is what he makes himself and he is always in the making and always responsible. Materialism as well as idealism is an escape from responsibility, for it reduces man to a mechanism and freedom to an illusion.

Heidegger does not consider himself a philosopher of existence in the usual sense of the term. His thinking is a philosophy of *Dasein* with special emphasis on the human *Dasein* which is the consciousness of "being there," or "being present." His view can therefore be called the philosophy of being, remembering that by being he does not mean *things* in the universe.

Heidegger's view goes beyond stating that existence precedes essence. He affirms that we can never know that existence has essence; the "that" cannot be reduced to the "what." The intent of Heidegger is to destroy the idea of essence and substance, yet his view of "nothingness" appears to denote a quasi-essence or substance which is the source of being, or as Wahl remarks, "it differs from everything that there is, and therefore must be 'Being' itself."<sup>18</sup> Our striving with nothingness is the attempt

<sup>15</sup> Sartre, J.-P., *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>16</sup> Brunner, E., *Man in Revolt*, tr. Olive Wyon. The Westminster Press, 1946, pp. 114-163.

<sup>17</sup> Sartre, J.-P., *op. cit.*, p. 58.

<sup>18</sup> Wahl, J., *op. cit.*, p. 13.

to bring order out of chaos. Existential seriousness in Heidegger is man's full responsibility to shape his own destiny. In agreement with Sartre he believes man must do this on his own, for his life's journey is a solo flight. Heidegger and Sartre differ with respect to the idea of relatedness of selves. For Heidegger selves are like Leibnitz's monads without windows, whereas for Sartre there is an "uneasy absorption of one consciousness into another, or their reciprocal making of each other through the destruction of each other."<sup>19</sup>

Heidegger and Sartre also disagree with respect to the idea of dread. For Heidegger dread is the condition of being "thrown into the world," and most distressing is the fact of being thrown toward death. The dread which confronts Sartre is not so much the fact of death as the fact of freedom. Men are condemned to be free, and it is the kind of freedom which makes man a homeless creature. In the thought of both dread is contrasted "to an everyday self-deceiving manner of existence, which conceals the tragic terror of the individual's loneliness beneath a soothing multiplicity of conventional and eternal demands."<sup>20</sup>

Heidegger's view of the limitations of knowledge becomes evident when he defines truth by the Greek term *ἀλήθεια*, in which *λήθεια* originally meant "to remain concealed."<sup>21</sup> He rejects the conventional theory of truth as the right relation between thought or representation and a thing. Truth is not restricted to a scientific, scholarly, and philosophic knowledge.<sup>22</sup> Every person who lives in a historic situation is, in his own way, concerned with truth. Truth must be related to the whole of human *Dasein*. We can be sure there is much truth which is unknown. The problem of truth and untruth is so difficult because the "within the whole" is revelatory and concealing at the same time. There is a not-yet-truth of concealment and a mystery that precedes and outlasts all uncovering.<sup>23</sup>

### III. CHRISTIAN EXISTENTIALISM

The classical philosophers attempted to interpret the world rationally. The summit of this attempt was the thought of Hegel who believed that the truth is the whole, and that the whole must be rational. Human reason is divine and through progressive stages it can reach its culmination in the divine intelligence itself. Against such power of reason and such

<sup>19</sup> Grene, M., *Dreadful Freedom, A Critique of Existentialism*. University of Chicago Press, 1948, p. 76.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>21</sup> Heidegger, M., *op. cit.*, p. 144.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 143-167.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 175.



system-building, Søren Kierkegaard made a strong protest. A clear example of this revolt, including also his aptness for ironical criticism is evident in the following passage.

"Now tell me honestly, is it (the System) really quite finished? For in that case I shall prostrate myself, even though I should ruin a pair of trousers"—for by reason of the heavy traffic to and from the system the path is not a little soiled—I always got the answer: "No, as yet it is, in fact, not quite completed." And so it was postponed again—both the system and the kneeling.<sup>24</sup>

However, Kierkegaard did not reject the idea that reality is a rational whole, that reality is a system. "An existential system cannot be formulated. Does this mean that no such system exists? By no means; nor is it implied in our assertion. Reality itself is a system—for God, but it cannot be a system for any existing spirit."<sup>25</sup>

Kierkegaard revolted against Hegel's view that all the thesis-antithesis relations could be rationally elevated into a synthesis. There is too much in human experience which does not lend itself to a rational system, and therefore the synthesis is a paradoxical divine synthesis. God is not human reason magnified; there is an eternal qualitative distinction between God and man, making God the "wholly other."<sup>26</sup>

In Hegel's thought, religion in its highest stage becomes one with philosophy; for Kierkegaard, philosophy or reason is scandalized at the highest stage of religion—the point of the incarnation, where the "crucifixion of reason" takes place, because reason cannot give an account of the eternal Being coming into history at a certain time and place. The incarnation is the paradox of paradoxes, only to be grasped by faith, and the clearest expression of the antithesis of faith and reason. This means decision followed by commitment to that which is not rationally justifiable. Out of such thinking evolves Kierkegaard's assertion that "subjectivity is the truth."<sup>27</sup>

For the Danish thinker, philosophy is seriously limited because of its own nature. The essential characteristic of philosophy is objectivity and "in this objectivity one tends to lose that infinite personal interestedness in passion which is the condition of faith . . ."<sup>28</sup> According to his think-

<sup>24</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, *Samlede Værker*, ed. A. B. Drachman, I. L. Heiberg, and H. O. Lange (2nd ed., Copenhagen, 1920-31), VII, 95. Cited by Grene, M., *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>25</sup> Kierkegaard, S., *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, tr. David F. Swenson and Walter Lowrie. Princeton University Press, 1944, p. 107.

<sup>26</sup> Kierkegaard, S., *Sickness Unto Death*, tr. Walter Lowrie. Princeton University Press, 1941, pp. 161, 192, 209, 211.

<sup>27</sup> Kierkegaard, S., *Postscript*, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.



ing the conflict between objectivity and subjectivity is a conflict between certainty and passion.

While faith has hitherto had a profitable schoolmaster in the existing uncertainty, it would have in the new certainty its most dangerous enemy. For if passion is eliminated, faith no longer exists, and certainty and passion do not go together.<sup>29</sup>

Christianity is spirit, spirit is inwardness, inwardness is subjectivity, subjectivity is essentially passion.<sup>30</sup>

The speculative philosopher, Kierkegaard maintains, does not have the infinite personal interest, nor is it possible for him to attain it, for "his task consists in getting more and more away from himself and becoming what might be called the contemplative energy of philosophy itself."<sup>31</sup> Man speaks about a universal history, about giving objectivity to the world process and to existence, but how well has man recorded the passions, the sufferings, and inwardness of humanity? How much of a man's conscious experience of a day becomes recorded in history, becomes objectified? For Kierkegaard "existence involves first and foremost particularity, and this is why thought must abstract from existence, because the particular cannot be thought, but only the universal."<sup>32</sup>

Kierkegaard's charges against reason are carefully and systematically stated and answered in L. Harold DeWolf's book, *The Religious Revolt Against Reason*. The charges against reason are divided into four classes. Respectively they are reason's objectivity, its presumption, its ineffectiveness, and the evil consequences of trust in it.<sup>33</sup> But in spite of the alleged inadequacy of reason to give an account of reality, Kierkegaard held philosophy in high esteem. "All honor to philosophy, all praise to everyone who brings a genuine devotion to its service. To deny the value of speculation . . . would be, in my opinion, to prostitute oneself."<sup>34</sup>

To turn to a contemporary religious existentialist, Karl Jaspers, in his discussion of philosophical faith,<sup>35</sup> regards faith as something other than knowledge, but adds that it is always allied with knowledge. Faith must not be taken to mean the irrational; the life of the spirit does not begin at the point of the irrational. "The subjective and objective side of faith are a whole."<sup>36</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 290.

<sup>33</sup> See DeWolf, L. H., *The Religious Revolt Against Reason*. Harper & Brothers, 1949, pp. 60-105.

<sup>34</sup> Kierkegaard, S., *Postscript*, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

<sup>35</sup> Jaspers, K., *The Perennial Scope of Philosophy*. The Philosophical Library, 1949, pp. 1-7.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

Jaspers does not consider religion as an enemy of philosophy but as something which continuously troubles it. The One of philosophy is not the One of the Bible. The prophetic faith is more powerful than the philosophical idea, but is inferior in intellectual clarity. Philosophy is not to be confused with religion. The philosopher as a man is part of a whole, and his philosophizing also stands from its very inception in this context.<sup>37</sup> Philosophers are at fault if they think they can universalize religion and thus penetrate the depths of religion. The objective, measurable, and empirically real must be present as valid for everyone, but such a method is existentially indifferent in the face of depth experiences such as suffering, pain, danger, guilt, and death.

Another contemporary, Gabriel Marcel, in harmony with the other existentialists, distrusts the adequacy of reason to give a coherent account of reality. His general tendency has been to enhance difficulties found in speculative philosophies and as a result he has developed a distrust of all systems of philosophy. Whatever its ultimate meaning, the universe into which man has come cannot satisfy his reason, and man must have the courage to admit it once and for all.<sup>38</sup> Even self-knowledge, regarded by some thinkers as the starting point, leads to difficulties. There is a sense in which the thinker can place himself on the stage and cross-examine himself, but this can be done only because there is a form of participation which has the reality of a subject. There is mystery in cognition for which no epistemology can account.<sup>39</sup>

So long as I am concerned with thought itself I seem to follow an endless regression. But by the very fact of recognizing it as endless I transcend it in a certain way: I see that this process takes place within an affirmation of being—an affirmation which I *am* rather than an affirmation which I *utter*: by uttering it I break it, I divide it, I am on the point of betraying it.<sup>40</sup>

For some time, Marcel says, he shared the illusion that one could overcome confessional differences and establish a religion founded on reason which should be acceptable to all thinking men. There is too much in human experience that calls for commitments which, although good and true, do not realize their purpose. Such tensions between inner commitments and the objective ends appear to Marcel as existential in the highest degree.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

<sup>38</sup> Marcel, G., *The Philosophy of Existence*, tr. Manya Harari. The Philosophical Library, 1949, p. 92.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

## IV. THE EXISTENTIAL EMPHASIS AMONG THEOLOGIAN

With some reservation it is also permissible to enter under the philosophy of existentialism the names of such dialectical thinkers as Barth, Brunner, and Niebuhr. Emil Brunner writes favorably about this new philosophy but also warns against identifying it with Christian theology. Writing about the problem of the subject-object antithesis in thinking, he declares:

It was left for the newest form of philosophy, the existential, to question the validity of the antithesis itself. It is no accident that the source of this new thinking is to be found in the greatest Christian thinker of modern times, Søren Kierkegaard. It is therefore particularly suggestive for us theologians to attach ourselves to this philosophy, the entire bent of which seems to correspond with ours. Yet we must emphasize again that our considerations are purely theological, that hence they are not dependent upon the correctness or incorrectness of that philosophical undertaking which seems to run parallel—apparently or really—with our own.<sup>42</sup>

In agreement with the Catholic thinkers Gilson and Maritain, Brunner makes a contrast between revealed knowledge and rational knowledge. It is only in the encounter through revelation that we receive saving knowledge of divine Reality. Brunner is especially concerned with biblical revelation, which he describes as "a way of acquiring knowledge that is absolutely and essentially—and not only relatively—opposite to the usual method of acquiring knowledge, by means of observation, research, and thought."<sup>43</sup>

It is interesting to note that Nels Ferré's use of existential thinking in terms of whole response, depth thinking, or whole thinking is the same definition that Emil Brunner in one of his earlier works gives to reason. Brunner declares: "By reason I mean not merely the intellect but all the faculties of man as such."<sup>44</sup> On the basis of the definition just given, though both stress the importance of existential thinking, the latter would consider the former as having surrendered to a rational and empirical theology because his faith arises out of human thinking and experience.<sup>45</sup>

In a summary statement it seems fair to say that both Christian and anti-Christian share the experience of despair which comes as a result of man's finiteness, calling for decision and commitment in the face of man's

<sup>42</sup> Brunner, E., *The Divine-Human Encounter*, tr. Amandus Loos. The Westminster Press, 1943, p. 82.

<sup>43</sup> Brunner, E., *Revelation and Reason*, tr. Olive Wyon. The Westminster Press, 1946, p. 23.

<sup>44</sup> Brunner, E., *The Theology of Crisis*. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929, pp. 14, 15.

<sup>45</sup> Is it possible that while many attempts are being made to define existentialism, it has already become necessary to speak about a neo-existentialism? The question can be raised as to whether an empirical theology might not be inclusive enough to do justice to both the existential and rational aspects of theology, thereby making the existential and theoretical perspectives complementary, rather than contradictory, in an adequate interpretation of religion.

inability to give wholeness to reality. But the decisions are not alike. Karl Jaspers declares that:

the presence of gaps in the world structure, the failure of all attempts to conceive of the world as self-contained, the abortion of human planning, the futility of human designs and realizations, the impossibility of fulfilling man himself brings us to the edge of the abyss, where we experience nothingness or God.<sup>46</sup>

Where there is no meaning, the result is despair. Existence without meaning is an encounter with nothingness,<sup>47</sup> that dreadful freedom<sup>48</sup> out of which man creates himself. Though both types of existentialism assert the unavoidable experience of dread and anguish, their final attitude toward such experience is different. For the Christian existentialist the experience of dread can serve a purpose and need not be continuous; it is overcome by God's grace. The Christian existentialist transcends himself by reaching for something greater than himself. The atheistic existentialist also can transcend himself, but only in a purely human sense. The despair of the former is due to man's remoteness from God. The despair of the latter is due to his belief that God does not exist and to the "nothingness" that remains.

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<sup>46</sup> Jaspers, K., *op. cit.*, p. 32.

<sup>47</sup> See Kuhn, H., *Encounter With Nothingness*. H. Regnery Company, 1949.

<sup>48</sup> See Grene, M., *Dreadful Freedom*. University of Chicago Press, 1948.

# Folklore of the Berbers

ERNEST WALL

## I

A MISSIONARY, OF NECESSITY, becomes a citizen of the universe. He may have read George Fox's references to "that of God in every man," or have studied what Leibnitz called the *philosophia perennis*; but whether or not this leads him to accept any of the various Eastern expressions of monism, he is forced to believe with the Sufi that truth is in all men; for "What is not in man he cannot know."<sup>1</sup> Certainly truth is expressed in the folklore of the Berbers, as in the philosophy of the Upanishads, or the teaching of the Torah.

The Berber language of North Africa is very old, and has its difficulties. Henri Basset<sup>2</sup> quotes Pliny's statement that Berber terminology is "absolutely impossible to pronounce with any other throat than theirs"; but, says Basset, it was the idiom of the early Libyans, spoken 2,000 years before our era. It was, of course, the language of St. Augustine and the North African Church; but since the Arab invasion of the eighth century it has changed, being modified and enriched by Arabic.

Nevertheless, although the Berbers have taken over the religious vocabulary of the Arabs, the terms are Berberized; and Berber remains unwritten. It has no written literature of its own—beyond certain biblical translations made by the missionaries—but it has folklore, stories, legends. These always form the literature of the primitive; and the storytellers are the historians and the philosophers of primitive tribes.

In any market scene among these Near-Eastern people, the greatest crowds will be found listening to the storytellers. These men go from market to market. In primitive life the story-telling session takes the place of Western dramatic companies on tour, or the vaudeville shows of long ago. However, not only most markets but most villages have their own storyteller, who is the historian and philosopher of the clan. In the villages, the

<sup>1</sup> Nicholson, R. A., *The Mystics of Islam*, p. 84, quoted as "an axiom of the Sufis."

<sup>2</sup> *Essai Sur la Littérature des Berbères*, p. 2.

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storyteller is frequently an old woman, who not only tells stories but fortunes, and concocts love and hate potions on the side. A stranger rarely gets an opportunity to hear the women at work; but he may hear from others the stories they tell; and he may see the results of their potions and charms in the physical and emotional illnesses which result.

The missionary hears stories in the market place, or from visitors to his own house, or from visits he makes to Berber huts—especially if he stays there overnight. Then, little by little, he gathers information which gives shape to the ways and work of the storyteller in a primitive land. For instance, he finds that there are certain traditions which govern the professional storytellers. They, like all primitive people, are very superstitious; so there are certain formulas used to ward off evil. It may be a simple "They tell, they tell, how that, etc." or "Let God not do to us as to those who say . . ." But it may be a more forceful introduction, such as "The jackal, may God curse it, but upon us may God have mercy," or "May God send us good and not evil. The evil be to others, the good to us," and then follows the story.

## II

These stories are of various kinds. Sometimes a story is told in explanation of a simple riddle. One may ask (and this I heard in a third-class railway car traveling through the night in Algeria), "Why is February always wet?" There are two rainy seasons in Algeria, and the second begins in the latter part of January and includes the whole of February. In answer to the question I was told the story of how February was always a gambler; but once, when playing cards with January and March, February lost two of its days, one to March and one to January. Now they both have thirty-one days and February only twenty-eight; so February cries for, mourns over, its lost days.

Or it may be a story explaining some historic event; as when one day a companion and I were seated with the men of a mountain village. We were seated on a ledge overlooking the valley. This, probably, led an old man to offer the following explanation of the historic reason why the Berbers in Algeria are called the Kabyles, which is the French form of the name *Laq'abaili*. He said that the Arabs swept across North Africa in the eighth century conquering all before them; but when they came to Kabylia, which is in the Atlas, or mountainous region of Algeria, they saw that the Kabyles lived in small villages perched on top of the hills. It would be a long, hard job to conquer them; so the Arabs massed their armies in the valleys,



and sent emissaries to the villages above saying: "You see our strength, and you know what has happened to others who have tried to withstand us. Do you want to fight, or will you receive the religion of Mohammed?" Our fathers saw the uselessness of war and answered "*Nq'ebbel!*" which means "We receive." So the Arabs called us the *Iq'abailien*, the people who received; and the nickname became our national name. The story, shall we say, gives an aspect of the truth; but the final conquest, if there ever was such a thing, was more difficult than the story suggests.<sup>3</sup> To this day the Berber despises the Arab, and says he hasn't any nose—which means, he has no honor.

The storytellers in the markets tell mostly stories of love and adventure, stories of perilous missions performed on behalf of hapless maidens, or stories of how some too-strict husband was deceived by the lady's lover. Often these stories are woven around some character of legendary fame. Frequently, however, stories of animals are featured; for primitive people are childlike people and love the stories of animals as much as they like those of love and adventure. There has been a Greek influence upon the Berbers; but whether that accounts for it or not, here as in Aesop the tortoise illustrates how "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong," and the jackal, a larger type of fox, is a favorite subject of their animal stories.

For instance, one story tells how the lion saw the jackal with a pair of slippers he had stolen. Afraid that the lion might not find them good to eat, and fulfill his hunger by eating him, the jackal began to divert the lion's attention by telling how useful such a pair of slippers were. He offered to show the lion, and led him to a sun-drenched path which burnt the paws of the lion. Quickly the jackal offered to make the lion a pair of shoes for his feet; but made them so snug around both feet and legs, that the lion complained. "Go lie in the sun," said the jackal, "and they will soon become easy." The sun only dried the leather until it was unbearably tight. The lion could not walk; so the jackal left him to cry in agony while he made good his escape.

Boulifa Said,<sup>4</sup> however, records a finer story of a lion's revenge. A woman was being carried away from her village by enemies, when a lion

<sup>3</sup> Bernard and Redon in their book *L'Algérie* speak of the Berbers as allies of the Arabs who eventually helped them in the Conquest of Spain; and this, according to Victor Piquet in *Les Civilisations de l'Afrique du Nord* (p. 71) was only after the Arabs had amassed all the forces they could muster and fought a terrible battle in which 180,000 Berbers were slain.

<sup>4</sup> Boulifa Si A. Said, *Langue Kabyle*, Adolphe Jourdan, Algiers. A. Honoteau in his *Essai de Grammaire Kabyle* also records many animal stories.

helped her to escape and carried her on its back to her own village. Her family rejoiced in her return and asked how she escaped. She told of the lion's aid, "but," she added, "his breath smelled terribly." The lion overheard this uncomplimentary remark, and meeting her later outside the village, said "Take a stick and beat me!" "I cannot," she replied, "for a lion rendered me good service." "I am that lion, and I say beat me hard or I shall devour you." When the beating was done, the lion let the woman go home.

Two months later they met again. "Look at the place where you wounded me," said the lion, "is it quite healed?" "It is healed," said the woman. "Know then that the wound from a blow will always heal; but not the wound from an unkind word." And he straightway devoured her.

Probably the stories which we should enjoy more are those retelling Bible stories. I have heard a Kabyle girl tell the story of Esther the Queen to a class of children, in a way to make you sit on the edge of your seat with interest. The trouble with literature that is merely oral is that so much of its power and beauty can be lost by an unimaginative retelling, especially by a Westerner. Of course, the old stories are embellished, but it is thrilling to hear the story of, say, Abraham and Isaac (or Ishmael, as the Moslems say it was), and of how when bound upon Moriah's altar the son said to his father, whose hand was so unsteady that the knife always turned aside before it reached its mark, "Courage, father, strengthen your heart! Let your liver be firm!"

One of the Bible stories I liked was the story of Enoch, who was in the habit of taking daily walks with God. On those walks they had talked of many things, including heaven; and Enoch's curiosity had been aroused. If only he could see heaven, he thought; but always at a certain point God would stop and say, "You had better be turning back, Enoch, or you will not be home before dark"—and no wise man walks abroad in the dark. So Enoch thought out a scheme. He would keep God talking so long that they would pass the usual turning point; then he would plead for just one quick glance around heaven before he went back home. This he did; and when he entered heaven, he took off his shoes as was his custom,<sup>5</sup> parked them in some obscure spot, and went happily to look quickly at a little of heaven. What he saw so enraptured him that he desired to stay and see it all. But, how could he avoid being sent back home? At the door he thanked God profusely, talking all the time, and quickly hurried away

<sup>5</sup> Kabyles take off their shoes, not their hat, when they enter a house. "Take off thy shoes" is the Eastern equivalent of "Take off your hat" in the West.

—*without* his shoes. At the first convenient clump of bushes he hid until the sun was setting; for dusk follows quickly; then he hurried back to the door of heaven, and like a man who has run far, panted, "I—forgot—my—shoes!" "Where did you put them?" asked God. "I think I can find them," said Enoch, and once more he entered heaven. He looked in all the wrong places, until he knew it would be quite dark outside. Then he found them; but as they looked out at the night, God said, "I can't send you out tonight, Enoch, I guess you'll just have to stay here." *So Enoch walked with God, and was not seen again on earth, for God took him into heaven.*

### III

Perhaps we may look at one or two groupings of stories, such as:

1. *Those which deal with problems of origin.* These are the story-tellers' answers to that basic question of the childlike, Why?

Why, for instance, does the scorpion have no head? Well, of course, it does have one; but it is so little apparent that it really does not have one to speak of, it is so crushed between its shoulders and hidden from view. So why does the scorpion have no head? It appears that at creation, God did not finish any created thing all at once or in one day; so the animals were formed and given bodies; but they had to wait and present themselves on a certain day before the Lord to receive their heads. Some of the birds flew swiftly, and were early at the appointed place; but the scorpion was slow. Thus on his way to the rendezvous he met the screech owl, who was already returning. The scorpion stopped in its tracks, looked at the screech owl, and asked: "What's happened to you?" It is true the screech owl has a flat trod-upon looking face; but he was very proud of it, and answered, "Why, nothing's happened. I've been to receive my new head—how do you like it?" After a moment of silence the scorpion said: "If that's the kind of thing they're giving out, I'd just as leave have no head!" So the scorpion never went to claim a head for itself!

In summer we have all wondered about the noise of the locusts. We may believe that he rubs his legs together and achieves that characteristic hiss; but the Berbers know different. The locust was the special creation of Moses; for after God had let Moses call down plagues on Egypt, and mystify the magicians with tricks done with his staff, he said to the Lord, "You have let me do some wonderful things, but you have never let me create anything. I would like very much to do that." "What do you want to create?" asked God. "I think it had better be something small," answered Moses, "maybe a bird!" "All right," said God, "you have my

permission." So Moses created the locust. He presented it to the Lord and asked, "What do you think, Lord; pretty good, isn't it?" "Yes," said God, "but what is he going to eat?" "I never thought of that," said Moses; and then, bewildered, he added, "I just don't know!" The Lord was silent for a moment, but finally said, "Well, Moses, I'm afraid he'll just have to eat wind!" So when you hear the hiss of the locust on a still, hot summer day, he is having his lunch—he is eating wind.

Why does a porcupine have all those sticks on its back? Because once the porcupine was a woman—a woman who so far forgot herself as to go into the woods one holy day to gather the fallen branches of trees for firewood. She had made the faggot and slung it on her back, when an angel spoke and said that since she liked to carry sticks upon her back in preference to worshipping God upon a holy day, it would be her fate, and that of her descendants, to do this forever.

There are many of these stories of the origin of animals, but some of the stories of origins show a more mature search for significances. In Kabylia, as in most Moslem lands, women are not only looked upon as inferior but treated as beasts of burden. Often you will see a man riding happily and unburdened on a mule or donkey while an old woman carries a huge burden, and, bent double, totters on behind. When the olives are gathered, it is the woman who climbs the tree, lest the man fall and hurt himself; he gathers what falls to the ground. Why is this so? Why is woman placed in this inferior position on earth? The answer lies in the story of Eve.

One day in the garden of Eden, Eve heard a call and was accosted by a stranger. She went to the gate, and he asked if he might see this wonderful place God had given her for a home. He was polite, and rather dashing. She thought there would be no harm in letting him see her domain, so let him in. He admired everything; and when he stood before the forbidden tree, he artlessly said: "What a beautiful tree. What delicious-looking fruit. Could you spare me just one?" "No," she said, "my husband says God has forbidden us to touch it." "Oh," he answered, "I see, your husband tells you everything; I suppose he's even told you of that other woman." "What other woman?" demanded the indignant Eve. "There is no other woman; I'm the only woman on earth." "Oh, did he tell you that, too?" "Well, if there is another woman, show her to me." "If you really wish me to, I will. Come with me." He led Eve to a part of the garden she had not troubled to explore. "Wait here," he said, "and when I beckon, come quickly and quietly, and look straight down below you, and

you'll see her." He went forward, parted some bushes behind which lay a still, clear pond. He beckoned, then pushed her gently forward and bent her head, until in the quiet unrippled waters she saw—another woman! She had never seen a mirror; and, in her foolish anger, she went and tore the fruit from the forbidden tree. That is why women bear burdens—yes, and why men must work; for "if it hadn't been for that fool woman—" but you can see how the story ends!

*2. There is a class of stories which illustrates ethical truth.*

On Saturday evenings in Algeria, ten or a dozen men, more or less interested in the gospel, would stay with us for supper and a meeting, and then sleep the night before going back again on Sunday. That was always an interesting meeting. The subject of a missionary's sermon is chosen by his audience; and they change it until it is interesting, then help him preach it by appropriate comments and illustrations. One night this story was told. What it illustrates will be fairly obvious.

A certain cagy partridge of the mountains was often hunted by the fowlers; but he was a wise old bird and always managed to escape; but when the local fowlers obtained guns, things became difficult for him. One day he had narrowly escaped a bullet, and his self-congratulations turned to despondency. He was worried. "This can't keep on. One day they will get me. One day I shall die." As his gloomy thought revolved around his sad plight, a ray of light suddenly gave him hope. "If only I had two heads, I should be twice as clever. I've done pretty well with one head; but with two, they would never get me!" It was so to be desired that he went and asked God to give him two heads; and when he woke next morning, there they were! The one head looked at the other in admiration. "Now we'll show them," said head No. 1. "Come, I'll show you where they hunt," and on the way he told head No. 2 about the guns he must watch for.

They reached the center of a field, and the two heads looked around for the hunter. "There he is," whispered No. 1, "behind that tree over in the corner. Watch! He's raising his gun! Now, off we go, come on, this way." "No," said No. 2, "this way!" "Don't be silly," said No. 1, "this way." While the two heads argued, the hunter shot; and that was the end of the bird with two heads. It was a pretty good illustration of the truth, "No man can serve two masters."

Some of the most impressive moments I've known have taken place in a native hut; particularly when staying there the night. After supper we would sit with the men of the family on the floor of the hut around the little fire in the center of the room. It is then you are likely to see a native



take a dry twig, poke the fire, and begin a story; and the story may be one like this:

A certain man had a little farm. It was only four acres of land, but it had a little house, a large olive tree, and two fig trees; and with that a man can live. But one year there was a great drought. The grain was not enough to live on; and the figs and olives failed. What could he do but sell his house, but not the farm, and hope that one year he would have enough to buy the house back again. It was a neat little house and a buyer was easy to find. "I will sell you my house," said the owner, "if you will let me keep the space on the wall by the door where is the nail on which I always hang my cloak. You see, from time to time I must come to till my field, or reap my little harvest; and I would keep that nail, that little space, that there I may hang my cloak. I shall deduct something from the price."

The buyer agreed. All went well until about two years later the former owner had done well working in the French village; and his land and trees bore such a wonderful harvest, that he had not only enough to live on, but the price paid him for his house.

"I want my house back," he said to the present owner. "It isn't your house, I bought it." "Yes, but now I have the price, and I want it back." "You can't have it back. I like it. It suits me. Besides, I let you have a nail in it, what more do you want?" "Ah, yes," said the former owner, "you did not buy the nail!"

Next morning he went to the nearest market, and collected the offal from the animals slain for meat. He went to his farm, and beneath his cloak he hung the evil-smelling offal. The family stormed and demanded; but the man would not heed. "It is my nail," he said, "I can hang what I wish on my own nail." A second day and a third day he repeated this performance, until the owner, in desperation, came and said, "Take your house and give me the money!" As the family moved away, and the former owner and his family moved in once more, he said, "I knew I'd get my house back." After I had heard that story I told it to some Berber orphans who were living with us; but I baptized it with a text, "Neither give place to the devil." For, I added, if you give him a nail, he will get all the house—all your soul!

3. *There is a class of story which deals with the more profound problems of human frustration before the mystery of life.* Because these problems plague us all, some stories which attempt to illuminate the mystery are similar to those found in other countries; as, for instance, the story of the



stone-breaker who would be king. A stone-breaker sat beside the road before a pile of rocks and flint it was his duty to break. He put the hammer down to wipe his perspiring brow, and heard the sound of chariot wheels approaching. It was the king! He rose quickly, bowed as the chariot passed, then sat down once more before the piled-up task and wished that he were king, so that none might have power to command or to resist him.

God is merciful and heard the stone-breaker's wish, and lo, he became a king. But the summer sun was unbearably hot. No command the king uttered could lessen its heat. So he wished he were a sun, for the sun was greater than a king.

God is great, and lo, the man became a sun who shone down upon kings and paupers and made all aware of his power. But a cloud arose, obscured his view, and shielded earth from his rays. Was a cloud then greater than the sun? He wished he were a cloud.

God is merciful, and lo, the man became a cloud that could obscure the sun and send down rain upon the earth. But those rocks below were unmoved by the rain—resisted and repulsed it. So a rock was greater than the cloud. He wished he were a rock.

God is great, and a rock he became, but a man with a hammer sat before him and proceeded to break the rock into fragments! Realizing then that the man had power over the rock which resisted the rain of the cloud which obscured the sun which harassed and distressed the king, the man wished for his first estate, and so once more he sat beside the road before the pile of rocks and flints it was his task to break.

My final story has in view the baffled complaint as to why certain unjust things are allowed to happen in life. A traveling sheikh stayed with us one night. He made a specialty of casting out devils; and after supper he told us the story of "The man, the cup, and the angel."

There was a man named Ali ben Said, who had been sorely tried by the circumstances of life. In his distress he railed against life and questioned the justice of heaven. To this man an angel appeared, who said, "Come, walk with me and I will teach you about life." Along the way they approached a house; and the angel said, "We must call at this house, for here lives a good man I was sent to see." In the course of conversation the man of the house brought forth a beautiful silver goblet, wrought by the most cunning work of the silversmiths. You could see he was proud of his little treasure; and they watched as he lovingly put it away in its box. However, just as they were taking their leave, the angel got the householder to go into the courtyard on some pretext, took the silver cup

and hid it beneath his cloak. They quickly said adieu; and when the angel's bewildered companion could speak he said, "I don't understand. How could you do such a thing?" But the angel said, "Wait, Ali; let us go on."

Soon they arrived at another house, where lived a good man and his adult son. It was the man's *only son*, and none but an Easterner knows the poignancy of that term. The father's talk was all about his son; and Ali thought how fortunate they both were. When they were leaving, the old man said, "My son will see you on your way." But they were scarcely a step from the house when the angel made some mysterious gesture, and the beloved son staggered back and fell dead before the threshold. Ali was dumbfounded; but again in answer to his spluttering questions, the angel said, "Wait, O Ali. Let us go on."

They went to two more houses before the angel volunteered the explanation. At the third house there lived an old blind saint, who was wholly dependent upon a long-time servant. The blind man proudly told of the goodness of his servant, and gladly allowed him to be their guide to the place they wished next to reach. But at a bend in the road, where there was a deep gorge, the angel threw the servant over, and he crashed to the rocks beneath and died.

The fourth visit was more surprising than the others. Here lived, not a good man, but a notoriously bad man. If anyone deserved to die, he did. Instead, the angel gave him the beautiful silver cup he had taken away from the first good man, and said good-by.

"You must explain," said Ali. Then the angel said, "Learn that the meaning of life lies not in appearances. It lies in things which do not appear. The first man was a good man. Once he had regularly worshiped God, and sacrificed with self-denial to help the less fortunate; but since he possessed that cup he has taken to use it for wine, which is forbidden by the religion of God. So he has neglected both God and man, and has spent his money to fill his cup. It was to save his soul he lost his cup.

"The second man did not know that his son had planned to kill him, and enjoy his inheritance sooner; while the blind man did not know that his servant was deceiving him, stealing from him, and soon would leave him penniless. As to the fourth man, true, he was too bad to live. So I gave him the cup. He will use it freely, and soon he will die in his cups."

That was the story; but perhaps one could find the philosopher's idea enshrined in an appropriate passage from the Koran, such as this, taken from the Fourth Sura, or chapter, which begins, "O men, fear your Lord

which hath created you." The passage contains Mohammed's reply to those who objected to the discomforts of war, which the followers of the prophet were called to endure:<sup>6</sup>

Say to them: The enjoyments of this world are transitory; the future life is the real treasure for those who fear God. Ye shall not be in the least injured at the day of judgment. . . . If good befall them they say, "This is from God!" But if evil befall them, they say: "This is from thee, O Mohammed!" Say, all is from God. And what aileth then these people that they are so far from understanding? . . . therefore . . . trust in God; for God is a sufficient protector.

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<sup>6</sup> Taken from the translation of George Sale.

## H. Paul Douglass and American Protestantism

FREDERICK A. SHIPPEY

SINCE THE DEATH of Harlan Paul Douglass on April 14, 1953, at the age of 82 years, many people have had occasion to recall his long and pre-eminent leadership in American Protestantism. Author of seventeen books, writer of innumerable articles and a hundred church survey reports, Douglass acquired a broad background in twelve years of pastoral experience, six years of college teaching, and twelve years in the administration of home missions. Further, he directed religious research in one capacity or another for thirty-two years, edited *Christendom* (now *The Ecumenical Review*) from 1938 to 1948, and figured prominently in ecumenical Christianity during the past three decades. He tramped the wheatfields with migrant workers but also directed the educational work of seventy-five Negro schools. Indeed he knew local Protestantism in America as did few of his contemporaries.

Whether his work has enduring value is attested, in part, by the scholars who refer to or quote from his books. Among American sociologists who accord Douglass such professional recognition are Nels Anderson, Lloyd Ballard, Gordon Blackwell, Niles Carpenter, Stuart Chapin, Wilbur Hallenbeck, Eduard Lindeman, George Lundberg, and Milton Yinger. His influence fell also upon teachers on faculties of theological seminaries in the United States who drew insights from his writings. A brief list would surely include Samuel Kincheloe, Murray Leiffer, Ross Sanderson, Harvey Seifert, and Arthur Swift. Further, even this reckoning leaves unmentioned a great host of ecumenical leaders, denominational executives, pastors, and keen-minded laymen who knew him personally or through his writings. Recently the establishment of "The Harlan Paul Douglass Collection of Religious Field Research Studies" in New York by the National Council of Churches brought additional honor to his name. His

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books are in the great libraries of the nation: his lifework is continued by those who see and take up the unfinished tasks.

Because of his acknowledged leadership, it may be in order now to make a brief and preliminary statement of Douglass' contributions to American Protestantism. Despite the broad scope of his writings, attention can be directed to the areas of his chief labors. There are at least three of them: (1) church and community research, (2) urban impact upon the church, and (3) church unity. Into such primary concerns, H. Paul Douglass poured a great amount of energy and imaginative work. Few have overcome so many obstacles in procuring fulfillment of purpose and yet retained a noble personal faith.

#### I. PIONEER IN CHURCH AND COMMUNITY RESEARCH

Although largely self-taught, Douglass achieved exceptional skill as a field researcher in religion. While serving as an administrator in home missions, he developed and used a simple questionnaire to determine the merits of projects applying for financial aid. Soon the instrument was expanded into "a system of thumb-nail surveys." This rudimentary attempt to gather facts upon the church and its community introduced Douglass to religious research and stimulated his interest in its possibilities. Therefore, in 1920, Douglass was ready when called to undertake urban surveys for the Interchurch World Movement. To complete the now widely-known Saint Louis Church Survey was his first project. Soon thereafter he joined the staff of the Institute for Social and Religious Research where he had a tenure of thirteen years. From such modest beginnings until his death thirty-three years later he worked actively in the survey field at the national level, serving the various denominations as well as the National Council of Churches. Douglass always insisted that he had stumbled into the research field.

Douglass was not the first person to engage in surveys of American church life, but he did participate in the early phases of the movement. Though preceded by Warren Wilson, Walter Laidlaw, Hermann Morse, Charles Carroll and others, he soon found ways to contribute significantly in the survey field. Fully convinced of its importance, he encouraged the establishment of social research bureaus or departments, however humble, in theological seminaries and in councils of churches. In a few larger cities, pathfinder survey service was instituted. Yet, as a whole, the idea took root slowly in Protestantism.

The total amount of research work with which his name is associated

is phenomenal. Possibly no one has completed more field studies of church work nor had a longer tenure of continuous service. Findings from his surveys were published and widely circulated. The reference is made not only to large definitive works such as *The Saint Louis Church Survey*,<sup>1</sup> *The Springfield Church Survey*,<sup>2</sup> and *The Metropolitan Pittsburgh Study*,<sup>3</sup> but also to numerous studies in fugitive format—pamphlets and mimeographed materials. Among the latter can be found reports of Protestantism in Seattle, Tioga County, Philadelphia, Rochester, Detroit, Youngstown, Louisville, Minneapolis, Newark, selected Wisconsin towns, Jersey City, San Francisco, Portland, Buffalo, rural Iowa, Pittsburgh, Bergen County, and Hartford. This partial list shows an enormous breadth of survey interest. It is important to note that his extensive field studies were summarized (1950) in *Some Protestant Churches in Rural America* and *Some Protestant Churches in Urban America*.<sup>4</sup> Evidently, more than any other person, he made a career of religious research.

Primarily because of his extensive travels and prolific writing, ministers and laymen everywhere came to accept him as an authority in the church survey field. This impression was further strengthened by the appearance of *How to Study the City Church*.<sup>5</sup> The 215-page treatise is now a standard work in the field, having laid down the main patterns of current religious research. Douglass "generalizes methods successfully pursued in actual projects of the Institute for Social and Religious Research," giving special attention to the survey requirements of parish ministers and local denominational executives. The inclusion of self-study procedures for use by a single church or a group of churches increases the practical value of the book. One is astonished to note the range of items suggested for study. Virtually every aspect of the institution's life is raised up for scrutiny—from the building site to a job-analysis of the minister. How to gather pertinent information on the local community is treated at great length also. Indeed so detailed and suggestive is the volume that it is used for collateral reading in many university level research courses bearing upon religious phenomena. As a whole the treatment is well-written, comprehensive, and amply illustrated with sample schedules, tables, maps, and charts. It stands as a monument to Douglass' ability to organize the contributions of other people into a coherent methodological system.

<sup>1</sup> George H. Doran Co., 1924.

<sup>2</sup> George H. Doran Co., 1926.

<sup>3</sup> Allegheny County Council of Churches, 1948.

<sup>4</sup> National Council of Churches, New York City, 1950.

<sup>5</sup> Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1928.



Never content merely to systemize another's labors, he has greatly revised the older methods, closing the gaps in procedure, broadening the base of survey work, and tracing the practical implications of research for the work of the local church. The art of an expert generalizer and the skill of a creative researcher are combined here. The book made a tremendous impression and has been widely read.

A trademark of his methodology is the combination of quantitative with qualitative data. This practice gave more trouble to his critics than to Douglass himself, since he habitually looked beyond the survey materials to discover the inwardness of the church's life. The dynamics of the situation were always real to him. He not only demonstrated that the church is measurable but also that it can be studied as a dynamic social institution. Strangely enough he was imitated by many religious researchers in this regard. His methods of work and basic philosophy of research caught the attention of his contemporaries, even those outside the church. The widely-acclaimed community study entitled *Middletown*, by the Lynds, drew upon the Douglass survey approach. His influence is implicit also in such recent studies as *Church and Community in the South*, by Blackwell, et al, *Southern Parish*, by Fichter, and *Jews in Transition*, by Gordon. It is no exaggeration to say that Douglass has had some effect upon religious and community survey work in America.

In the closing years of his life, he resolved to attract to and train in field research every person he could win. One by one these individuals entered an apprenticeship in survey projects directed by the master. Then each neophyte was steered into professional graduate study or aided in securing employment in the survey department of a council of churches or denominational headquarters. An informal count made recently discloses that no less than a dozen such persons came under Douglass' influence recently. Indeed few living researchers have escaped the influence of his prolific pen, successful methods of survey work and perceptive insights respecting church life. He has literally outwritten, outsurveyed, out-traveled and outspoken all his contemporaries as a pioneer in church and community research.

## II. STUDENT OF THE CITY CHURCH

When Douglass turned from active leadership in home missions to do urban research he brought with him an enduring affection for the country church. This fondness is clearly noted in his earlier books—*The Little Town*, *The New Home Missions*, *Christian Reconstruction in the South*,

and *How Shall Country Youth Be Served?* Thus it comes as no surprise that religious work of the countryside qualifies as a normative guide for American Christianity. Inevitably the rural prototype became his model. All other church work was to be compared with it.

As early as 1921, Douglass tentatively ventured the suggestion that the urban church is an evolved rural church.<sup>6</sup> However, this generalization moved so rapidly to the forefront of his thought that by 1924 it became an underlying presupposition of his views respecting the city church. In 1929, Douglass wrote, "What the majority of city churches get over to the average member is a rural pattern of the religious life which they have embellished a trifle, but without modification or enlargement of its inner principle."<sup>7</sup> Six years later, and fourteen years from the time he had begun city research work, Douglass urged that "The review of the variety of church activities in terms of urban and rural churches has tended to substantiate the theory that the urban church is an evolved rural church."<sup>8</sup> Thus from 1921 to 1935, a hazarded guess metamorphosed into a dogma. This tenet was picked up by sociologists and church leaders, and now passes as common knowledge.

Like a familiar refrain, the dogma is repeated throughout his writings and is especially underscored in *The City's Church*, *The Saint Louis Church Survey*, *The Springfield Church Survey*, *1000 City Churches*, and *The Protestant Church as a Social Institution*. Although Douglass authored eight books dealing with various aspects of urban church life, he never lost this emphasis upon the rural origins of the city church. Out of his considerable knowledge of country churches this viewpoint had first arisen. Possibly, extensive urban survey experience and painstaking analysis convinced him of the merits of the position.

The hypothesis was greatly elaborated in *1000 City Churches*.<sup>9</sup> It became the basis for a now widely-known classification of city churches, depending upon the degree to which the transplanted rural institution showed adaptation to the unfamiliar urban environment. Access to the system of classification is discovered through an extensive study of the nature and content of church program. Thus, putting the matter on an objective basis, Douglass finds the following types—slightly adapted, unadapted, internally adapted, socially adapted, and widely variant churches.

<sup>6</sup> *From Survey To Service*, Missionary Education Movement, 1921, p. 94.

<sup>7</sup> *The City's Church*, Friendship Press, 1929, p. 161.

<sup>8</sup> Douglass & Brunner, E. de S., *The Protestant Church as a Social Institution*, Harper & Brothers, 1935, p. 155.

<sup>9</sup> George H. Doran Co., 1926.

This five-point scale rests upon a convincing analysis of the organizations and activities found in city churches. Eventually a comparison is made with rural churches in order to note the evolutionary trends away from the rural prototype. To Douglass this basic typology became virtually a *sine qua non* for subsequent research labors. But Douglass treated other city church problems with equal authority and thoroughness. Lack of space precludes more than a mere mention of *The Suburban Trend*<sup>10</sup> which discusses American suburban life, institutions, and cultural problems. Though written in 1925, it remains as one of the outstanding books in the field. Further, *The Protestant Church as a Social Institution*, which Douglass co-authored with Brunner in 1935, emerged from an enormous background of forty-eight research projects published in seventy-eight volumes. Because it had access to the largest body of objective data of its kind ever gathered, the book is large and significant. Both urban and rural religious phenomena are treated and attention is directed to the model church as revealed by cumulative researches. Its generalizations furnish benchmarks on Protestant church life and therefore still attract the attention of pastors and scholars.

An important by-product of church work in the city was the rapid rise of agencies for Protestant teamwork. The urban community presented a challenging opportunity and hence Douglass cultivated the city as though the success of the ecumenical movement depended upon it, as indeed it does. Concerted Protestant action started feebly at the turn of the century and only gradually caught on. First it was but a voluntary movement of individuals and local churches. When eventually it was legitimized by proper denominational ecclesiastical machinery, the idea spread like wildfire. Douglass among others nurtured the feeble interest into a thriving movement.

By 1929, approximately fifty larger cities had co-operative agencies. Today more than seven hundred councils or federations of churches are functioning in the United States. Some agency for Protestant co-operation can be found in nearly every important American city. Comity, to which Douglass gave so much in time and energy, undergirded this general movement. The loosening of denominational ties was a factor also. But even larger forces were at work. "The truth is," insists Douglass, "that the denominations are becoming alike through processes of natural evolution. This large underlying measure of essential religious homogeneity vitalizes the movement of organized co-operation, as well as making it all but in-

<sup>10</sup> Century Co., 1925.

evitable."<sup>11</sup> He was among the first to appreciate the urban roots of church co-operation. It proved to be an important by-product of religious life in the city.

### III. ADVOCATE OF CHURCH UNITY

As a result of wide experience in home missions and in community surveys, Douglass developed a passionate concern over co-operative Christianity. Indeed this interest grew to such intensity that he felt impelled to invest monumental labors in behalf of church unity. This movement received aid from him in two important ways—through writings and through personal promotional activity.

To establish a beachhead, he tackled shameless and rampant religious competition at the point of church extension, and subsequently broadened the attack to include church adjustment. This effort lifted the struggle out of its parochial dimensions into the broad arena of total Christendom. Comity was the practical answer he circularized to cope with the debilitating competition among denominations. This is another name for co-operative church planning. Douglass explained that "comity is thus intended to contrast with competition in the institutional expansion and readjustments of the church."<sup>12</sup>

Thus, with a single stroke, Douglass threw himself into the center of the struggle which was going on in nearly every community throughout America. At the grass roots, ecumenicity was struggling to be born and to find an adequate form through which to express itself. Here could be found thousands of broad-minded denominational leaders who were ready to listen to an advocate of ecumenical Christianity provided he manifested even a slight interest in their local problems. Characteristically, Douglass rose to the occasion, placing himself in their service. Thus he mustered a large and sympathetic hearing for the co-operative cause which by now had become a noble obsession. His talent for circulating workable solutions to aggravating interchurch problems lifted denominational relationships to a level where they metamorphosed into a positive effort toward church unity. This kind of astute perception led him repeatedly to touch the Protestant struggle at crucial points and with an accurate sense of timing. He saw possibilities for church unity even in the days of bleakest denominational competition and nurtured the promising aspects of the situation into a grass roots ecumenical movement which is still growing.

Among his writings are these important books: *Church Comity, Prot-*

<sup>11</sup> *The City's Church*, pp. 173-4.

<sup>12</sup> *Church Comity*, Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1929, p. 6.

*estant Cooperation in American Cities*,<sup>13</sup> *Church Unity Movements in the United States*,<sup>14</sup> and *A Decade of Objective Progress in Church Unity*.<sup>15</sup> Currency and noteworthy impetus to the idea of a co-operating and unified Protestantism was gained by the publication of these volumes. They furnish a systematic account of the struggle at the grass roots. For this reason, the books constitute a landmark in the American Church. Who does not now know that the former Federal Council of Churches and kindred organizations were greatly strengthened by the public's wide reading of this literature? Written with scientific care and enthusiasm, they tell the world of Douglass' confidence that Protestants can make common cause and that such togetherness can be formalized into relatively permanent organization. He had faith that the ecumenical movement would result in "the knitting of the sundered fabric of the Church, and that the immediate objectives toward which it is directed are in harmony with the ultimate goals of the Kingdom of God."<sup>16</sup>

No matter what the stubborn realities of any situation were, Douglass always managed to lift up fresh possibilities for tangible success and new advance. This quality of leadership can be illustrated respecting church comity. Upon completion of a wide survey of the views, experiences and difficulties of comity committee work in the United States, he pointed out that specific gains can be made through (1) the wider use of informal committee processes, (2) the development of a theory of church placement based upon the physical structure of the community, (3) the objective definition of exclusive parishes, and (4) the inclusion of minority ethnic groups in comity practice. Some leaders would have become discouraged from a perusal of the problem-laden materials. But Douglass never lost his vision of the coming ecumenical church nor his sharp perception of practical ways by which to move toward that goal. As F. Ernest Johnson insists, Douglass made "a peculiarly distinguished contribution to the ecumenical movement."

Surely his leadership possessed a charismatic quality. He did more than any other single man to make ecumenicity a thriving proposition at the grass roots. By means of thousands of addresses, talks, oral reports, and discussions, he ever promoted the work of church unity. In countless visits to ministerial associations, church federations, and groups of religious

<sup>13</sup> Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1930.

<sup>14</sup> Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1934.

<sup>15</sup> Harper & Brothers, 1937.

<sup>16</sup> *A Decade of Objective Progress in Church Unity*, p. 140.



leaders, he spread the idea of ecumenicity across the nation. Even as an octogenarian, his evangelical spirit and radiant personality constituted a well-known trademark in these circles. Personally he stimulated the inception of many new local agencies for church unity, the formation of scores of indigenous comity committees and has literally sowed the nation with ecumenical advice and encouragement. "The capacity of the American religious public to solve its problems of unity by a movement from the bottom up," wrote Douglass, "should by no means be underestimated."<sup>17</sup> This proved to be a golden text for his life. While other men of his age were in wheelchairs or rest homes, he was out traveling the nation as an advocate raising up new friends for unitive Christianity. As late as 1950 he wrote a fresh statement describing the possibility for success of the ecumenical movement. He was always prospecting for unity.

Today his books are standard works in this field. How much Douglass contributed toward making ecumenicity a reputable, practical, and acceptable process in American Protestantism through which denominational executives, pastors, and laymen could express their ecumenical longings is difficult to estimate. Yet it must be great. Through his efforts a working philosophy of church unity reached adequate formulation and the ecumenical movement received wide and dignified promotion for more than a quarter of a century. Realistically he oriented the movement both to its unsolved problems and to the larger objectives of world Christianity. Time may ultimately seal these labors with honor.

In attempting to sum up his contributions to American Protestantism, David Barry stated:

Hardly any other man in the circles of co-operative church work was so universally known, respected, and loved. There are few contemporary Protestant leaders who have not, at one time or another, turned to him for practical guidance and wise counsel. His writings on the sociology and strategy of the church continue to be basic texts in these fields, as do also his contributions to the concepts and practices of ecumenicity.<sup>18</sup>

Those who knew Harlan Paul Douglass as a pioneer in church and community research, as a student of the city church, and as an advocate of church unity concur. Among Protestant leaders of his generation he was peerless.

<sup>17</sup> *Church Unity Movements in the United States*, p. 507.

<sup>18</sup> *Information Service*, April 18, 1953.



## Book Reviews

**A History of Christianity.** By KENNETH SCOTT LATOURETTE. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953. xxvii-1516 pp. \$9.50.

Professor Latourette celebrates his retirement from Yale Divinity School in an appropriate and impressive manner. This, the latest (surely it will not be his last!), book is a historical, evaluative essay of Christianity. Despite the number of pages, it is still a treatment in brief, for to take the total phenomenon of Christianity as subject matter means that even within the generous limits of 1,500 pages the task can be performed only by a high compression of material and a dry brevity of literary form.

The first thing to be said about the book is that it is not just another Church History. Nor a textbook history in the ordinary sense, although doubtless it will be widely used as a textbook. It is an interpretation of the world's greatest religion in its total life and in all its relationships, presented in the course of a factual narrative. How well has the job been done? The present writer is not competent to pronounce judgment; specialists in many fields will ultimately have their say. However, those who have read Latourette, and especially his *History of the Expansion of Christianity*, know the fairness, carefulness, and accuracy of his writing and will not be disappointed here. Without attempting any over-all judgment there are still things to be noted as distinctive of this comprehensive work.

1. It reflects the consciousness of our time in that it takes Christianity as a whole and considers its place in the world. Never has the church realized as it does today that Christianity is a movement, a force, or whatever one may call it, in a world that questions its faith and wars on its basic virtues. At least, not since the days of St. Augustine. Today, the focus of attention for thoughtful Christians is not some part or function of the church, but the total fact of Christianity. Hence, the timelessness of the theme. We have histories of the church, histories of Christian doctrine, histories of liturgy and of relations between church and state. But this all assumes a solid, historic fact that presumably will always be there. The question today is one of dynamics; will Christianity itself live? And what has been and is likely to be the total effect in the world of Christianity if it does go on?

To such questions the book is addressed. It shows the pulsations and responses of a movement which is greater and more subtle in its effects than the external history of an institution or the intellectual development of a doctrine. Christianity is seen in uneasy and changing relation to the world, sometimes in conformity, often in opposition, and in both victory and defeat. The author is a Christian who believes in the ultimate triumph of the faith. But he tells the story objectively, factually, admitting that surmise and hope are based on faith and not on historically demonstrated conclusions. However, the fact that to him it is the story of the outcome in time of God's enterprise of human redemption gives it an intensity of meaning that no merely academic interest could impart.

2. One question that will inevitably be raised about this history is whether it is not just a summary or a varied retelling of the seven-volume history of missions. The answer is No. There are, inevitably, similarities; and the vast accumulation of

material that comprises the former work provides fact and perspective throughout. The division into periods of the long story is substantially the same. Likewise, the studies in each period of the effect of Christianity on the environment and the effect of the environment on Christianity appear as evaluation in this over-all treatment. And the missionary expansion of the faith is an essential and not a peripheral part of the story. But this is not a history of missions any more than it is a history of the Church or of the doctrine. Perhaps for the first time the missionary character and action of the Christian religion have been put into proper perspective in a total history of Christianity. Dominant interest in most histories has been the ecclesiastical institution or the development of dogma. An occasional paragraph or a few pages have from time to time taken note of the fact that missionary expansion has taken place, but the main preoccupation has been with thoughts and action within the household of officially organized Christianity. Latourette keeps always in mind that the faith is in a world most of which is not Christian and is engaged with forces both without and within which challenge and often threaten its existence and integrity.

3. This is an "ecumenical" history of Christianity. The author is a Protestant and a Baptist, yet there is a complete lack of narrow vision or bias. The same critical judgment that is exercised in the treatment of one part of the Christian world is applied equally to every other. It is this fairness and objectivity that has given his *Expansion of Christianity* place in Roman Catholic libraries. It will be a good thing for Protestants to get the full story and the discriminating appreciation of much in the life of the Roman Church. This does not obscure the basic differences between the two branches of the church, nor the objections of Protestants to things constitutive of Roman Catholicism. Likewise, in an ecumenical age, it is important that the source of Orthodox, Coptic, and many other churches should be followed and their place in the total scheme of Christianity understood. If Latourette sees the Protestant churches now in the ascendant and likely to be so increasingly, it is, after all, upon the basis of a considerable array of fact and achievement.

4. Finally, this is a book to read. Few will start at the beginning and read right through to the end, although that is not so great an undertaking. But the dry, direct style lures one on from page to page. Taken by itself it might become monotonous. There are no climaxes or tense moments, no exciting arguments. The importance and intrinsic interest of the subject matter itself is depended upon to hold attention. No artificial aids are supplied for the reader who has no interest in the event itself. But to the one who does have such interest this form of telling will become a transparent medium, calling no attention to itself but providing a direct presentation of the event to the mind.

Summaries in retrospect and prospect will give to the reader a constant sense of direction. The general form and arrangement of material, in fact, make this a history not alone for the technical student but for the general reader. Even discussions of doctrinal struggles, while necessarily lacking in detail, are so presented that the layman can see the general place and meaning of the theological positions involved and the final outcome in the formulation of the historic faith. It remains only to say, in this brief review, that the book is a masterpiece of discriminating selection and straightforward narrative.

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**Spiritual Problems in Contemporary Literature.** Edited by STANLEY ROMAINE HOPPER. Religion and Civilization Series. Published by the Institute for Religious and Social Studies. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953. xvi-298 pp. \$3.00.

This latest volume issued in the Religion and Civilization Series, consists of lectures presented under the title "Contemporary Spiritual Problems as Reflected in Contemporary Literature" (1948-1949 and 1949-1950) at the Institute for Religious and Social Studies of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. An additional paper, "Religion and the Mission of the Artist," by M. Denis de Rougemont, which was delivered at the International Conference on Christianity and Art in 1950, has been included by the editor, Professor Stanley Romaine Hopper of Drew Theological Seminary.

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of the subject to which, in varying ways, the contributors to this volume have addressed themselves. While admitting the greatest possible diversity of approach as eminently desirable, one frequently has difficulty in determining precisely how the several contributors have defined their common subject, and, hence, what guidance they intend to bring their readers. The editor has arranged the contents of his book under three headings: "Religion and the Artist's Situation"—the place of the artist in the modern world; "Religion and the Artist's Means"—the way in which the artist makes use of materials, conventions, and techniques in a disoriented world; and "Religion and the Artist's Beliefs"—the use of traditional religious frameworks in the solution of artistic problems.

The editor's conception is an impressive and audacious one; his collaborators have not always helped him maintain the clarity of his outline. James Johnson Sweeney's "The Literary Artist and the Other Arts" is a thoughtful and lucid exposition of the double function of the work of art: as an individual creation, it represents the imposition of order on chaos; seen in the light of its tradition, it becomes part of a larger unity. This elaboration of T. S. Eliot's celebrated essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," neither explicitly nor implicitly deals with religious or spiritual problems. The second essay in this section, by Albert Salomon, undertakes to defend art against what he calls sociology—a vicious, soulless determinism, descended from Auguste Comte and (somewhat mystifyingly) expressing itself in the work of Flaubert and Henry James. Art, in contrast, stands for unity and the affirmation of spiritual values. No case can be made for so benighted a sociology as Mr. Salomon describes and vigorously condemns; but what responsible and enlightened sociologist preaches or practices such a sociology?

Irwin Edman's "Philosophy and the Literary Artist" develops with characteristic incisiveness and grace a proposition about the relation of philosophy to creative literary art: "Philosophers work out new conceptions that become agents of critical reconstruction of our experience. The reason there is a time lag in the imaginative use of ideas by men of letters is that men of letters, being creatures of imagination, are compelled to wait until ideas have become the general imaginative climate." Horace Gregory explains how the revival of faith in our time has coincided with the death of naturalism in modern fiction. The late Theodore Spencer deals with the various ways—all more or less inadequate—in which the modern drama attempts to treat spiritual problems; and Delmore Schwartz expounds his conception of the poet's vocation in the modern world (but surely he is in error in speaking of James Joyce's "training as a Jesuit").

Such is the first part of this book. The remaining twelve essays are equally catholic in approach, and frequently concern themselves with, at best, peripheral aspects of the editor's announced theme. William Barrett's "Existentialism as a Symptom of Man's Contemporary Crisis" is quite frankly a short history of existentialism (to which Professor Edman briefly and memorably pays his respects), with brief side-glances at Tolstoy's "The Death of Ivan Ilyich" and Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground*.

Kenneth Burke's remarkable "Mysticism as a Solution to the Poet's Dilemma" (reconstructed from the editor's notes on Mr. Burke's lecture) establishes a curious relationship between poetry and religion: "Mysticism arises in Poetry in so far as the 'things' of the poet's sensory experience are felt to be infused by a hierarchical spirit. Empirically, things just *are*; but mystically, things *stand for*. Mystical poetry is thus forever using the language of things to point beyond things, to the ultimate invisible, intangible order (the realm of hierarchy) by which they are infused." But this association is no more indefensible than Cleanth Brooks's argument in "Metaphor and the Function of Criticism." He maintains that the New Critics, having confuted Matthew Arnold's prophecy that literature would take the place of religion, dethroned by science, have concomitantly assisted in the rehabilitation of religion by their emphasis on the close reading and careful explication of poetry (which is essentially metaphor). "I think," he says, "that it is no accident that T. E. Hulme, that remarkable figure of the early twentieth century, insists, in his discussion of esthetics, on the centrality of metaphor, and, in his discussion of religion, on the importance of the doctrine of original sin." It may be no accident, but the chain of propositions that is crowned by this statement includes a number of amazing logical knight's moves.

On the whole, the most satisfactory essays in this volume are those which deal most specifically with the expression in literature of religious positions and theological problems. Particularly notable is Professor Amos Wilder's "Protestant Orientation in Contemporary Poetry," which offers a close and thoughtful examination of poems by Karl Shapiro, Allen Tate, Wallace Stevens, and W. H. Auden. Readers of Professor Wilder's excellent book, *Modern Poetry and the Christian Tradition*, are familiar with the sensitivity of his critical intelligence and the cogency of his argumentation.

An equally distinguished study is Professor David Daiches' "Theodicy, Poetry, and Tradition," which traces the theme of divine justice in the work of Milton, Matthew Arnold, Keats, T. S. Eliot, Yeats, Aldous Huxley, and Dylan Thomas, honoring (as does Professor Wilder) the heretics and individualists, whose work, although frequently critical of orthodox religious positions, is solidly rooted in religious tradition. As Professor Daiches eloquently says: "The problem of the modern literary artist, therefore, is not to find usable myths so much as to find ways of handling knowledge in a context of value. . . . So I dissociate myself from the myth hunters, who see the modern literary artist's basic need as new myths, as well as from those who deplore the lack of a common religious background in our civilization. I think cultural pluralism is a good thing. I think it is both wise and civilized to realize that no single religious creed represents either the final historical truth about what happened or the final theological truth about the nature of man and his relations with ultimate reality, but that any creed may have valuable insights to contribute."

Professor Hopper deserves our gratitude for having conceived and compiled this interesting collection. Closer proofreading would have improved the volume: a

slip in punctuation on page 131 makes nonsense of a sentence of Professor Brooks, and a typographical error (*end* for *tend*) on page 75 inverts the sense of a great line from "Lycidas":

Alas! What boots it with uncessant care  
To tend the homely slighted Shepherd's trade . . .

MILTON CRANE

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**The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption: Dogmatics, Volume II.** By EMIL BRUNNER. Translated by Olive Wyon. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1952. x-386 pp. \$6.00.

The first volume of Brunner's three-volume definitive work on Dogmatics was *The Christian Doctrine of God*. The third projected volume will be eschatological. This volume, ably translated by Olive Wyon, deals with the realm of creation and God's redemptive work in history. More specifically, it discusses in great detail the meaning of creation; man as creature and sinner; God's providence and his preservation and government of the world; history, the Law, and the "fullness of time"; the foundation of the Christian faith; and, finally, the saving work and the person of Jesus Christ.

Brunner is, first and foremost, determined to expound our Christian faith in the pure light of Revelation, that is, in strictly biblical terms—no more, and no less. But he also wants to do so as reasonably as possible, that is, with full recognition of the achievements of modern science and of modern historical research and biblical criticism. In addition, he has an honest concern for theological and philosophical clarity and consistency. He is thus making a mighty effort to steer a middle course between rigid fundamentalism, ecclesiastical orthodoxy, and antirationalism on the one hand, and what he regards as an unregenerate, rationalistic liberalism on the other. This effort is, in my judgment, only partly successful; but it is so honestly made that his failures, to which I shall return in a moment, are themselves illuminating.

The volume is also illuminating affirmatively. I am neither a theologian nor a textual critic, but I suspect that Brunner has performed a very real service in attempting to restate, as accurately and fully as possible, the actual content of Biblical Revelation. He has certainly given us a very rich answer to the question, What does the Bible itself tell us about God and man, nature and history, order and freedom, sin and salvation, the work and the person of Jesus Christ—and what does it *not* tell us? Here Brunner's contribution seems to me to be notable and timely. I must repeat, however, that I can merely voice a layman's appreciative reaction.

My chief criticism of Brunner is philosophical though, I hope and believe, religiously oriented. It relates ultimately to his attitude to reason, but more immediately to his conception and use of science, historical and textual criticism, and philosophical speculation.

He is, first of all, very insistent that the established conclusions of modern science be accepted by Christian Dogmatics. In discussing the problem of creation, for example, he says: "We would be well advised once for all to abandon the contemptible habit of taking refuge behind the hypothetical character of these results (of scientific research)—this dirty trick of a lazy apologetic—and to acknowledge the results of



scientific research which all scholars accept because they are based upon proof, and to admit that they are obligatory also for us." (p. 33)

He is equally impressed by some of the findings of modern anthropology and psychology: "Of course we must recognize that there is an anthropology based on natural science which is quite independent of the Christian Faith, and there is a psychology, which, at least in part, is not affected either by faith or unbelief, a knowledge of facts about man which the Christian must weave into his picture of man like anyone else, if his picture is to be a true one." (pp. 46-7)

In short, Brunner definitely rejects the rigid "verbal inspiration" fundamentalism which finds itself in radical conflict with modern science and modern textual criticism. "We cannot say too strongly that the Biblical view of the world is absolutely irreconcilable with modern science. . . . [But] the world view which the Bible gives us has nothing to do with Divine Revelation (p. 39). The Book is never the canonical form of His revelation, but the Living Word, expressed as His acts in History, as His intervention in the history of men." (p. 201)

He tries, however, to draw a sharp line between scientific "facts" and scientific "theories" (" . . . it is absolutely essential to keep facts and theories separate," p. 83), so that he can accept "established facts" but substitute a biblical interpretation of them for a scientific or secular interpretation. This isolation of scientific "facts" is, I believe, quite indefensible. What is required is a much less naive and a much more synoptic interpretation of science as a whole with special concern for its pre-suppositions, methods, validity, and limits.

Such a radical reinterpretation of science is possible, however, only within a wider philosophical context, and it is precisely here that Brunner is most suspicious of human reason. He is very critical of philosophy on three separate counts: (a) for its inevitable error when it relies on reason and secular experience alone and ignores Revelation (cf. his repeated criticisms of Idealism, ancient and modern); (b) for its "arrogant" attempt to know what cannot be known and should not be speculated about (e. g., creation *ex nihilo*, the ultimate mysteries of sin and redemption, the dual nature of Jesus Christ, the necessity for the Cross, etc.); and (c) for its search, even in the light of Revelation, for "eternal truths" (cf. pp. 277ff.). The first of these criticisms is, I believe, quite valid. If we take special revelation seriously we must believe that it mediates to us crucial insights which are not elsewhere or otherwise available. Here Brunner is at his best. His second criticism might be restated in a more defensible manner. There are indeed ultimate mysteries which radically transcend our rational comprehension. What Brunner seems to do again and again, however, is to push his own interpretation of a Christian doctrine as far as he can and then declare that any attempt to go further is arrogant and impious. Even more serious, however, is his deep-dyed suspicion of reason itself and its perennial search for truth—his apparent insistence that faith and reason are ultimately hostile rivals and that reason must always be beaten down whenever it challenges or criticises the deliverances of faith.

I cannot, in a brief review, document this last charge; I must refer the reader to the volume as a whole. I heartily agree with Brunner's basic "Christocentric" orientation and his insistence that Revelation is really meaningful only to those who can respond to it as sinners and with faith. I also agree that "sinful man cannot help interpreting the glimpses of the Creator in the creation in the wrong way . . ." and that "Natural Theology is therefore not, as that medieval doctrine believes, a



reliable basis for Christian theology" (p. 23). But I must urge as strongly as possible, in opposition to Brunner, the "liberal" respect for reason, and this on *Christian* grounds. Brunner is eloquent in his Christian defense of the ultimate "goodness" of the body and its natural functions, duly guided and disciplined by faith. I wish he were as convinced of the corresponding "goodness" of the finite human mind at its contrite and clear-headed best.

I can best summarize my criticism of Brunner by saying that he seems to me to be in a state of uneasy and unstable equilibrium. His break with Barth is only partial and half-hearted. He wants to be as reasonable as possible, but he lacks the courage of a critical faith in reason itself. Hence his impossible attempt to draw a sharp line between Christian dogmatics and theology, between theology and philosophy, between scientific "facts" and scientific "theories." What is lacking in his approach is a really radical re-examination, such as we find in Tillich, of the relation of theology and philosophy to one another, of reason and Revelation, and of knowledge and faith.

This lack, in turn, repeatedly mars or vitiates his interpretation of various problems and doctrines. Much that he says, for example, about the miraculous is excellent—but he never trusts himself really to grapple with the problem of "wonders," and he finally lapses (p. 191) into real obscurantism regarding "the Occult." He rejects the "literalistic" acceptance of angels, yet declares that "for faith the reality of a world of angels becomes a certainty" (p. 146). He admits that "there is some sense in saying that Christ wills to be Lord over all men wherever they are and whatever they do" (p. 302); yet his self-restricted biblicism compels him to declare that "if he [i. e. Visser 't Hooft] means, that it is sufficient to know the Gospel of Jesus, the Savior, in order to lay down norms of conduct for the State, education, law, culture . . . we see that this whole 'Christological ethic' is pure fantasy" (p. 320)—and thus summarily to dismiss, as useless or arrogant, all attempts to develop an effective "social gospel." To cite one more example, his failure to think through the relation of faith and reason forces him to set up a quite unnecessary "either/or" regarding Jesus' teachings. He rejects, quite rightly, the "rationalistic" view that these teachings can be divorced from the person and life of Jesus; but this, he believes, forces us to conceive of his "message of the Kingdom" as "the exact opposite of an eternal truth" because "it is in the highest degree historical" (p. 279). This radical either/or interpretation of Jesus' teachings seems to me utterly unnecessary and unjustified, both biblically and philosophically.

Let me conclude, however, on a more appreciative note. Brunner does know his Bible and does expound many of its central doctrines with great clarity and power. Particularly effective is his Christocentric interpretation of the Old Testament and his accounts of the synoptic and apostolic witness. His numerous re-evaluations of traditional theology are shrewd and helpful. Many of his general criticisms of philosophical rationalism are cogent. Above all, his persistent attempt to be forthright and scrupulously honest is really admirable. On these and many other counts this volume deserves high praise. If only Brunner would remember that God intended man to use his reason, humbly but fearlessly, in the light of faith but with a good conscience, not only in science and textual criticism but in theology and philosophy as well, and not only for understanding but as a guide to enlightened Christian living in our secular society as well as in the Church!

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**Religion and Economic Responsibility.** By WALTER GEORGE MUELDER. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953. xvii-264 pp. \$3.50.

As intimated by the title, *Religion and Economic Responsibility* is addressed to churchmen, both lay and clerical, who seek to relate their religious faith to economic realities. Originally given as lectures at the Lowell Institute, these essays by the Dean and Professor of Social Ethics at Boston University School of Theology are semi-popular in treatment. Their intent is to develop the ethical applications of the idea put forth by the Amsterdam Assembly of the *responsible society* as the objective for Christians.

The author's approach to his subject is exploratory and empirical. "Responsibility," he states in his preface, "must go beyond both accommodation and negative moral protest. Ideal possibilities alone do not suffice; responsible possibilities must be in principle practicable" (p. xi). Accepting this premise he draws heavily upon social science surveys and case studies applicable to his theme. As he acknowledges in his closing chapter, his discussions of responsibility, standing "on the borderland of present fact and foreseeable consequence," appear less extreme than would have been the case had he simply analyzed from the perspective of the divine ideal and projected an ideal society. The result is that the social ethics presented throughout the book has greater relevance than do most pronouncements emanating from either theological or nontheological sources.

What Dean Muelder has to say of the general relationships of religion and economic life will be familiar to most readers of this quarterly. Religion exhibits both a conservative or static and a prophetic or dynamic function, both reflecting and serving as a critique of an economic order. Religion has to do with ultimate ends, values which men regard as supremely worthwhile; economic goods, on the other hand, are exclusively means, not ends. Religion and economic life are not to be separated because economic means are instruments for the higher ends of personal and social life, and economic thought and institutions that are divorced from the larger religious meanings belie the interpenetration of value and fact which exists everywhere in nature and society. Man cannot be considered as primarily *homo oeconomicus* from either religious postulates or the findings of the social sciences.

When the author turns to the doctrine of religious vocation, as related to worker and to manager, his discussion is more definitive. Any satisfactory concept of religious vocation, he states, must take account of the three principles enunciated by the Amsterdam Assembly: the principles of personality, of community, and of ultimate meaning. These principles he discovers are empirically verified by findings in social psychology, in anthropology, and in economics. Work is not an isolated aspect of man's life; it "involves many component factors, such as group satisfactions, status, responsibility, co-operation, craftsmanship, personal dignity, and the sense of performing socially significant service" (p. 58). An over-all integration of person, community, and ultimate meaning is essential if the worker is to serve God, not just *in* his work (as in Luther's view, which the author holds is essentially personal and compatible with the static view of society and a conservative social strategy), but *through* his work (a view which the author holds is both personal and communitarian).

Modern economic life, in relation to both mass worker and manager, does not, except in isolated instances, reflect this integral point of view. Freedom is requisite for personality development; this is the virtue stressed by those who defend the "free enterprise" system. But the freedoms of the worker, the author finds, "are

largely negative from the standpoints of the worker and of religious vocation. They are the freedoms of isolation, not the freedom of person-in-community making responsible decisions in democratic participation and for ultimately meaningful goals" (p. 47). So, too, in the "competitive profit and power struggle" he sees management facing the difficulty of finding "religious significance and ultimate meaning in administering the economic institutions with a view to conserving the value of personality and community" (p. 94). But his analysis of the incentives of economic leadership, showing how rich actually is the functioning of human nature in a field that has supposedly been erected on a single unchangeable incentive (the so-called "profit motive"), gives the author hope. Though devoted to money-making as a whole, American capitalism has been undergoing a considerable shift in the character and quality of its leadership, and its personnel have increasingly placed other than profit incentives at the center of their attention. Management, becoming a profession, is developing a sense of responsibility to society as a whole.

But, the author warns, we must not anticipate too much. The realistic problems of power must be faced. The best chapters in the book are those in which Dean Muelder discusses the problem of power organization in contemporary culture. This problem he considers from three perspectives: the ethical functions of collective bargaining, the religious conception of property and use of economic power, and proletarian power and responsibility. Neither labor nor management has as yet developed a philosophy which corresponds to the stage of industrial development at which the domestic and world economy has arrived. Trade unionism, though satisfying in part the needs of freedom of action, self-expression, and creative outlet, has generally confined itself to winning concessions from management rather than seeking to change the power balance in the state. "There cannot be a well defined sense of responsibility where relevant power in decision making is withheld" (p. 132); until the worker is in fact the member of a group making vital decisions, his desire to be a part of the business enterprise cannot be satisfied. This raises the fundamental question of property and its economic power.

Dean Muelder distinguishes between property for use and property for power. "There is a limit to the goods we can consume, but there is no limit to the power that men can express" (p. 137). Generally speaking, he points out, Christianity has dealt with property more as a problem of possession and use than a problem of power. It remains, therefore, to work out a religious conception of this second form of property. A religious conception sees all property as representing trusteeship under God, to be held subject to the needs of the community. Property for power, then, must be curbed and controlled in the interests of the whole community. As in the political sphere democracy is "the philosophy and procedure for determining how power is to be divided, shared, and otherwise controlled in the interest of the freedom of the person," so in the economic sphere an analogous challenge confronts us in behalf of freedom and order (p. 137). "To clarify its economic goals is part of the nation's religious vocation" (p. 164). In this connection the author's sections on Planning and Economic Power (with particular reference to the American scene) and on Power and Economic Revolution (with reference to the Russian economy) are two of the most objective presentations of this controversial subject which this reviewer has read.

The concluding chapter of the book indicates the main lines of commitment which economic responsibility to a *world order* would imply. Nationalism, cartels, imperialism and colonialism, and the conflict of Sovietism with Christianity are the issues discussed. "National sovereignty, even as modified by the U.N.," says Dean

Muelder, "is anachronistic from a political point of view (the world economic process having outgrown the political structure) and idolatrous from a religious perspective" (p. 234). While acknowledging that we must begin with the nations as they now are, he maintains that so fluid is the present situation that the religious purposes (involving a "personalistic, communitarian interpretation of world economic problems") to which the church calls the nations "may be even in the present era more realistic than expedient policies which respond to transient pressures" (p. 219).

With respect to Soviet power he recognizes that it is not likely that the Soviet Union will be willing to integrate its economy into a world economy in the foreseeable future. At the same time, a responsible world economy will not arise by external imposition of a plan from without. Inasmuch as his analysis in earlier chapters has shown that both the American economic system and that of the Soviet Union are actually mixed systems, each embodying certain aspects but not the full Judeo-Christian tradition, he holds that each can learn much from the other. "Our deepest concern should be not whether a system is 'democratic' or 'communistic' but whether it serves, by its means as well as by its ends, the common good of all mankind" (p. 242).

Dean Muelder has given us a significant work. It exhibits clarity, directness, ethical sensitivity, and, above all, sanity of perspective. He admits that much more needs to be done and promises a systematic treatise which will develop many themes taken for granted or omitted in this book. Anticipating a second volume, this review would make two criticisms of Dean Muelder's book, significant as it is.

One wonders if the author has altogether succeeded in writing for "churchmen, both lay and clerical." The semipopular vein in which the book is written is, perhaps, too popular for the informed (and already concerned) reader; on the other hand, the book has many allusions which call for a knowledge of history and of philosophy which the general reader will probably lack. A more basic criticism is the book's failure to point up the *unique* contributions of the Christian faith to the problems discussed. With some exceptions, notably his critical appraisal of Soviet Communism, most of Dean Muelder's suggestions and directives might have been as legitimately proposed by a secular social scientist as by one within the Christian tradition. Admittedly religion has its roots in the natural and thus is not to be discussed apart from its empirical base. But the scope of the Christian ideal is both higher and broader than that of the secular ideal; it incorporates revelation, atonement, and an apocalyptic setting for history. This difference, which is supremely important, is not, in this reviewer's opinion, sufficiently stressed in Dean Muelder's treatment.

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**The Biblical Faith and Christian Freedom.** By EDWIN LEWIS. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953. 224 pp. \$3.50.

God reveals himself in "mighty acts," says Lewis, but these become a reality only as they evoke faith as a response on the part of man. Implicit in this faith is the impulse to bear witness to the God who has disclosed himself and thus we can say that the Bible, written by men of faith, is "a body of witness, and that the reference of the witness is to God" (p. 11). But the men who wrote the Bible, being human, were both free and marked by temperamental and intellectual differences. Consequently differences occur in their characterization of God and his will for men in the Old Testament, and even in the characterization of the Incarnate Word and his significance for human life in the New Testament.

"Clearly, therefore, it is the very nature of the Biblical faith to make for freedom" (p. 14). One who today responds to God's living Word in Christ is thereby "free of verbalisms, free of legalisms, free of dogmatisms, free of sacramentalisms, free of ceremonialisms" (p. 114). And, recognizing the difference between the revealing God and the biblical witness to that God, he is free in his approach to the Bible. The principle governing this approach will be as follows: "... faith in Jesus Christ as God's final self-disclosure, his Living Word, will involve that whatever is seen to be incompatible with this faith, whether in thought, in belief, or in action, will be laid aside; and that whatever is seen to be called for by this faith, again whether in thought, in belief, or in action, will be accepted and submitted to" (p. 13).

The major portion of the book is an interpretation of the biblical message, beginning with the Old Testament and coming through the New, in the light of this principle. It goes without saying that Lewis brings to the task a wealth of biblical scholarship and, as his principle implies, finds in the Scripture what could be fairly termed an evangelical theology. On the other hand the application of his principle also results in a negative attitude toward numerous portions of Scripture. For instance he questions whether the condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23 came in all its harshness from Jesus himself; he doubts that Jesus ever advocated hating of one's own family, as in Luke 14:26; he rejects the passage in Matthew 16:18-19 in which Peter is made the foundation of the church and given the keys of the kingdom as lacking "the indispensable attestation of intrinsic credibility"; and he is amazed that Luke should ever have thought the parable of the dishonest steward worth preserving.

While Lewis' delineation of the faith is of great value and, incidentally, presented in a fine and dramatic English style, perhaps even more significant is the nature of the project he undertakes, namely, an attempt at a positive statement of the biblical faith based on the acceptance of the concept of revelation and the omission of the traditionally cognate concept of inspiration. He thus seeks to wed an orthodox view of revelation and a liberal view of Scripture. This poses the question as to how one determines the content of the normative faith within the Scriptures. Since its writers give admittedly varying and fallible witnesses to the revelation, the faith is not normative because it is biblical—indeed the Gospels themselves have to be judged in the light of the Gospel. But—and here we reach the crux of the matter—even the Gospel has to be determined in the light of some criterion, and this seems to be the human judgment of the interpreter without authoritative guidance either of inspired Scripture, or of the inner witness of the Holy Spirit, or of official church tradition.

"The principle is that anything in the Gospels that does not seem to the man of faith to be in harmony with the Gospel or with Him who is himself the gospel may be treated as of no Christian significance" (p. 156). If, for instance, another interpreter should reject Dr. Lewis' position that the "Jesus of history" should not be sundered from the "Christ of faith," the content of the Gospel would be radically altered, but if he is a devoted Christian and competent scholar, he would seem to have as much right on Lewis' premises to his view as does Lewis to his own. In short, his Christian freedom would give him the right to alter the content of the biblical faith which is the basis of his freedom.

This conclusion is obviously not consonant with Lewis' initial position that freedom is a corollary of the faith and not the master of it; but how to avoid such a



conclusion without returning to some concept of biblical inspiration or calling on the church for an official interpretation remains a problem. Let it be said, however, that it is not Edwin Lewis' private problem but rather that of a large portion of contemporary Protestant thinkers. This reviewer doubts that anyone who starts with Lewis' premises can do a better job.

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**Religion as Salvation.** By HARRIS FRANKLIN RALL. New York: The Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1953. 254 pp. \$3.00.

*Ed. Note: We have secured two reviews of this book from differing points of view.*

I

In 1940 Dr. Rall, veteran Methodist scholar and teacher, won the \$15,000 Bross Award for his work on *Christianity: An Inquiry into its Nature and Truth*. That heavily documented analysis presumably will remain the most definitive and lasting of his stimulating books and articles. It affords a stirring account of man's search for God and of the character and validity of a liberal Christian faith, but it has little to say about sin or salvation.

With the passing of the years and with his retirement, Dr. Rall apparently seeks to supplement the picture by a treatment recognizing the increased influence of continental theology and other more orthodox strains upon both the Amsterdam Conference of 1948 and many contemporary American religious thinkers. The present volume accordingly seems to represent a reasonable effort to comprehend the old and the new, and to synthesize in readable style the ideas of representative writers such as William Newton Clarke, Robert L. Calhoun, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Paul Tillich.

The result is a sketch according to the familiar pattern of Man, Sin, and Salvation. Man is viewed as an individual, akin to God, and endowed with moral freedom. Sin is examined with regard to its nature, origin, propagation, and consequences in guilt and punishment. Each man is so responsible for his own sin that the biblical stories are significant as types rather than facts.

The last and most important two-thirds of the book deal with salvation from a liberal yet semi-authoritarian Christian viewpoint, grounded especially in the Pauline scriptures, and stressing grace, repentance, faith, forgiveness, justification, and sanctification in both individual and social aspects. Recognition is taken of the work of man and of the Holy Spirit, and of mysticism, prayer, sacrament, symbol, history, the church, the Kingdom, and eternal life. The analysis is suggestive rather than exhaustive; it seems to be a lucid outline of what the author has elaborated in his courses, as well as a guide to introduce laymen to the theme and to stimulate ministers in their research for doctrinal sermons.

The student of comparative religion will note that except for a few casual references to the Old Testament, Egypt, Greece, the mystery religions, and India, the theme of salvation is developed entirely from the Christian standpoint, with the result that the book might more appropriately be entitled *Christianity as Salvation*. And many a modern scholar, even among theologians, will question the basic premises upon which the argument consistently yet dogmatically rests.

Dr. Rall has less in common in this volume than in that of 1940 with the



serious yet unorthodox inquirer who, as he then wrote, is "more or less aware of the changes affecting religion" and is "seeking to make his faith both honest and intelligent." Although one might wish for a deeper treatment of such points as freedom, education, symbolism, the problem of evil, and the teachings and practices of nonbiblical faiths, one realizes that the costs of printing and the limitations imposed by the publishers presumably have made it impossible for the author to share with his readers more of his wealth of scholarship. Fortunately by any calculation he has been able to offer his wide circle of admirers a clear and representative summary of a major area of Christian theological teaching.

EARL CRANSTON

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## II

This book is an illuminating presentation of the Christian faith as a religion of salvation. Almost the whole of Christian doctrine is surveyed from the perspective of man's urgent need for redemption and God's answer to this need in Jesus Christ. The net effect is to broaden and deepen the meaning of salvation, which is interpreted negatively as deliverance from evil and positively as abundant, eternal life in loving fellowship with God and man, accomplished through the gift in Christ of God's forgiving mercy, to which men trustfully respond.

The point of view is that of an evangelicalism both liberal and realistic. In his third chapter, for example, Dr. Rall makes a clarifying distinction between having faith in man and idealizing man. At a time when sentimental optimism regarding man has given way to neo-Calvinist pessimism, it is refreshing to have somebody point out that rejection of the former need not mean uncritical acceptance of the latter. The writer sees the stark reality of sin in all its wickedness and power, but he is also aware of the positive possibilities in man. He maintains that human nature *as such* is neither good nor bad, that man is neither totally evil nor totally good, but a mixture, hence in need of the saving grace of God. The image of God in man is badly blurred, but it is still there, so that man is not only in need of but capable of redemption through divine power.

The book presents a constructive alternative to the insistence of the dialectical theologians on the utter transcendence of God. God is seen as Other but not as wholly other, a real kinship between God and man being affirmed. Human freedom and moral responsibility are unequivocally asserted. The place of paradox and mystery in religion is recognized, but the importance of reason is also made clear. Reason need not be an arrogant assertion of human self-sufficiency, but may be humbly and reverently used as a pathway to better understanding of God, man, and salvation.

Chapter X adds to a cogent critique of traditional atonement theories a significant restatement of the role of Christ in salvation. His primary work, that of reconciling and uniting men with God and each other, is portrayed as made possible by the oneness of Christ himself with both God and man. Here the treatment is disappointing. Rall is understandably dissatisfied with the Chalcedonian two-nature doctrine of Christ's person because its abstract terms obscure the personal and ethical meaning of the incarnation. Yet he does little to clarify the relation of the divine and the human in Christ. The poetic imagery employed is suggestive, but hardly an adequate substitute for careful Christological discussion.

The author assumes a close linkage between religious salvation and ethics,

individual and social. He thus offers a valuable corrective to the widespread tendency today to regard the social order as hopeless and to dismiss effort to mitigate or remove social evil as lacking in religious significance.

Dr. Rall's style is lucid and interesting throughout; he is adept at making rough places plain. There is a minimum of technical theological language. These chapters will interest ministers in particular, stimulating the constructive doctrinal preaching which is greatly needed and increasingly in demand today. They should also appeal to laymen who desire a more adequate understanding of their faith. The work should be a worthy addition to the literature utilized in seminary courses in theology and college courses in religion.

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**The Unfinished Reformation.** By CHARLES CLAYTON MORRISON. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953. xvi-236 pp. \$3.00.

With the minds of many Christians focused upon the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Evanston, the thesis of this book by Dr. Morrison has particular relevance. His main contention, as the title suggests, is that the ecumenical movement is the modern attempt to complete what the Reformers began: to build the ecumenical church as an empirical reality. The tragedy of the Reformation was that it led to denominationalism rather than to ecumenicity.

A large part of the book is taken up with a severe critique of our denominational structure and practices. The fundamental charge against the denominations is that each one claims to be *The Church* when it is in fact a sect. Each one baptizes, ordains, celebrates the Lord's Supper, sets up standards of orthodoxy, etc., thereby usurping one after another the functions belonging to the whole church alone.

The result, says Dr. Morrison, is that the individual Christian can have no true experience of fellowship in the whole church because he inevitably belongs to a part which falsely claims to be the whole. The local church in turn is homeless because it belongs to a denomination—"a stepmother," which obstructs the communication and communion of the local church with the ecumenical church. In fact the ecumenical church has no "empirical existence." The local church ought to be the ecumenical church manifested in a particular locality, but it cannot be this because the whole has no experienceable structural reality.

What must happen to all our denominations is their dissolution *as churches* (though not necessarily as fellowships).

Dr. Morrison discusses three of the major obstacles to Christian unity: the historic episcopate, immersion-baptism, and congregationalism (the conception of the complete autonomy and independence of the local congregation and the rejection of all connectionalism). He emphasizes the fact that profound changes have affected all denominations through the enlargement of the area of freedom and that the major obstacles today "are not doctrinal, but are found in the inertia and momentum of the denomination as a going concern" (p. 159).

Over against our denominational structure Dr. Morrison sets the ideal of the Ecumenical Church defined as "the community of all those whom Christ has received into his fellowship." In this sense the church has always existed—the holy catholic church. But the author insists that the ecumenical church must have an ecclesiastical

structure; it must be experienceable. This empirical ecumenical church does not exist, but it must be brought into existence if we are to fulfill our Lord's prayer "that they all may be one." This cannot happen unless and until our denominations give up their functions as churches.

Dr. Morrison deals with two important questions that invariably come up in this context. One is how this Protestant unity differs from that of the Roman Catholic Church. Comparing and contrasting the "religious content" and the "ecclesiastical form" of the two faiths, the author makes a very convincing case for the radical difference between the two kinds of unity. He argues that Protestant unity need not and would not be monolithic in structure.

The other question is of more immediate Protestant concern: Will not the ecumenical church be just an all-inclusive super-denomination? The author is aware of this danger and considers how it may be avoided. He posits two basic principles: loyalty and freedom. Loyalty must be given its place in the *constitution* and freedom in the *fellowship*. Our denominations have mixed these up. Erroneously placed in the constitution have been: a standardized body of belief, special interpretation of the Bible, and the Bible itself. This has led to endless quarrels and divisions.

The transcendent loyalty of the Christian in the ecumenical church must be to Christ, but beyond that his freedom must be preserved within the fellowship. This must and will allow for varieties and diversities of interpretation and organization on the local level. To quote Dr. Morrison, "The inmost structure of the united church can have no formal standards of loyalty save the authority inherent in the Lordship of Christ and (that) the entire subject matter of the sectarian standards must be given its place in the freedom of its fellowship."

This reviewer would mention two negative reactions. First, the author exaggerates the perfection of the empirical ecumenical church and the miracle of transformation that would occur if our denominations were dissolved. In inveighing against "our man-made denominational churches," must one not admit that an empirical ecumenical church would be "man-made" in the same sense and, therefore, scarcely "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing"? Would there not be the same pressure and tendency to set up standards of belief and special interpretations of the Bible as tests of faith?

In the second place, I feel that the author does not give sufficient recognition to the degree to which an individual Christian can already experience the reality of the ecumenical church, nor does he admit the very great extent to which many denominations do not conceive of themselves as *The Church*, but see themselves as parts of the greater whole. Dr. Morrison says quite correctly that "the denominational system commands the field—the whole field—of Protestantism." But I think he overstates the actual situation when he adds, "No body of Christians, and no individual Christian, can transcend it."

Such questions as these do not, of course, affect what seems to me to be the central usefulness of this stimulating book, in its challenge to the denominations to look at themselves in the light of the ecumenical spirit and to ask themselves how unique and distinctive their individual witness may still be to justify their continued separate existence. Such self-searching should help to bring the ecumenical church a long step nearer realization.

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**That the World May Know.** By CHARLES W. RANSON. New York: Friendship Press, 1953. 166 pp. \$2.00 (pap. \$1.25).

**Missions Under the Cross.** Edited by NORMAN GOODALL. New York: Friendship Press, 1953. 264 pp. \$2.75.

These two books, published by the Friendship Press, together constitute an excellent body of working materials on the present status and future prospect of the Christian world enterprise. They are useful and valuable to all types of persons who are now active or who by reading these books may be stimulated to become active in Christian missions.

The authors are the most authoritative and capable persons who can be found for producing these books. Dr. Charles W. Ranson is now General Secretary of the International Missionary Council. He came to this position in 1947 after a distinguished career in various forms of missionary work. The book may be characterized as informative and inspirational with a prophetic forward outlook. Dr. Norman Goodall, a member of the Secretariat of the International Missionary Council, has edited the addresses, reports, and findings of the conference held at Willingen in the summer of 1952. This was the fourth world conference held by the International Missionary Council since it was established in 1921. This work is a source book which will be indispensable for missionary executives, speakers, and teachers of missions.

The Friendship Press is to be commended for the excellent format, printing, and bookmaking.

Is there any future in missionary work for young people of the highest ability? In the prologue of his book, Dr. Ranson tells the story of a student who graduated with high honors and who, when he advised his tutor of his intention to become a missionary, was told "You can't do that! There's no future in it." In the epilogue, this man, who had spent forty years as a missionary in India, told Dr. Ranson quite simply, "I have found in it the only future that matters."

The main outline of *That the World May Know* is as follows: Part One: Contemporary Perplexity. (1) A Disillusioned World, (2) Things That Cannot Be Shaken, (3) Unchanging Mission. Part Two: Historical Perspective. (4) Our Roots in the Past, (5) Pioneers of Expansion, (6) The Fruit of Fidelity: A World-Wide Church. Part Three: Christian Prospect. (7) New Frontiers of Faith, (8) Unity in Mission, (9) Unconquerable Hope.

Dr. Ranson is interesting and stimulating and the book is excellently written. It has an indispensable historical section, which fortunately is condensed.

In the main, the book deals with contemporary situations in missions. A valuable feature of the book is the section on suggestions for further reading. There is much striking and up-to-date information. Two items only will be cited. On page 90, Dr. Ranson points out the great growth of Christianity in Africa. How many of the readers of this review are aware that "In the great continent of Africa there are, it is estimated, approximately twenty-one million people who profess the Christian faith—a larger body of Christians than in all Asia!" Here is another striking statement: "Half the population of the world—more than 1,200,000,000 people—are still unable to read or write. The total number of illiterates in the world, as well as the percentage of illiterates, is still rising" (p. 111).

The book edited by Dr. Goodall is divided into two parts. Part One consists of an introduction and eleven addresses delivered at the Willingen Conference. The

sermon, "Labourers Together With God," is worth the price of the book. Reference will be made to this sermon in the concluding paragraph of this review. Part Two, "Statements and Reports," includes seventeen items. The heart of this section is in items two through eleven, which are: A Statement on the Missionary Calling of the Church, A Statement of the Calling of the Church to Mission and Unity, The Indigenous Church—The Universal Church in its Local Setting, The Role of the Missionary Society, Missionary Vocation and Training, Reshaping the Pattern of Missionary Activity, Report of the Committee on Interpretation and Action, A Statement by Delegates from the Younger Churches, Discussion by Delegates from the Older Churches, The Theological Basis of the Missionary Obligation. Especially significant are the papers on "The Missionary Call of the Church" and "The Calling of the Church to Mission and Unity."

It should be recognized that the Willingen Conference is, as Dr. Goodall states, a milestone not a terminus. This has been true of each of the great missionary conferences, starting with Edinburgh in 1910. Each conference has reviewed and summarized what went before it and has also looked expectantly to the future.

This paragraph is not intended as any serious criticism of the books under review. Dr. Ranson (p. 27) quotes the address made by Dr. William Temple in 1942 upon the occasion of his enthronement as Archbishop of Canterbury. Dr. Temple, in paying tribute to the preceding 150 years of the missionary enterprise, made the much-quoted statement: "Almost incidentally this great world fellowship has arisen; it is the great new fact of our era." Certainly the emergence of the World Christian Church is *one* of the great new facts of our time. This reviewer cannot agree that it is the only great new fact of our era! Bishop Temple spoke before the atomic age and also before the full meaning of dialectical materialism had shown its real nature and intent in the rise to world power of Soviet Russia. These two great new facts of our times constitute a most formidable challenge to the World Christian Church. In the decade that elapsed between Bishop Temple's enthronement and the Willingen Conference, the atomic age and Soviet Russia have emerged.

The Ecumenical Christian Church is beginning to find itself and is delivering its message in the light of these two new great facts. The future would be indeed dark without a world church to challenge and to oppose atomism and materialism.

What shall Christians do in such circumstances? Here we refer again to Bishop Dibelius' sermon, which should now be brought into the picture. This bishop went through Nazi persecution with determination and devotion. The heart of his great sermon is in this statement: "God does not lead his children *around* hardship; he leads them straight *through* hardship."

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**Ways of Faith: An Introduction to Religion.** By JOHN A. HUTCHINSON and JAMES ALFRED MARTIN, JR. New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1953. v-511 pp. \$4.50.

Here is a textbook of more than usual merit. It opens with an arresting discussion of the question, What is religion? Religion is described in terms of man's "intimate and ultimate concern," and is accordingly regarded as "an inevitable part of human existence." Yet as ultimate concern it may be devoid of traditional moral content: such is the case with National Socialism and Communism, systems that



while denying religion become themselves religions. The contributions made by anthropology, psychology, and philosophy to the understanding of religion are thoughtfully stated.

A survey of historical religions on this background fills most of the book. The religions of China, India, and ancient Israel are extensively described. Islam is introduced incidentally in a chapter on post-biblical Judaism, and briefly again in connection with Averroes, but the treatment of this great contender among world religions is surprisingly meager. A series of four chapters on Christian history and thought present a fair amount of necessary material of somewhat uneven value.

A chapter on "Catholic Christian ways of faith and reason" treats admirably the principal historic modes of relating reason with the Christian faith. The arguments of Augustine, for whom reason is included within faith, and of Aquinas, who viewed the two as separately autonomous and mutually supplementary, are expounded with sharp definition. Catholic thought, based on Thomism, we are told, welcomes all scientific knowledge that does not challenge the premises of Catholic theology. "But if a psychologist or anthropologist, his vision narrowed by his preoccupation with manifestations of man's creatureliness such as physical or biological needs, declares that, since from the standpoint of his interests such needs explain the whole of human behavior, therefore man is merely a creature; then such a scientist is indulging in theological error." Man is a *unique* creature, and it is man's difference from other creatures that must be accounted for.

It is unfortunate that the space given to the Reformers allows no comparable treatment of their theologies. The chapter on "the ways of classical Protestantism" is not one of the better chapters of the book. Indeed, the treatment of the English Reformation is misleading in its failure to suggest the religious reality of that movement, attested by the unflinching testimonies of a great number of martyrs and exiles and by a rich body of religious writing. The movement of Henry VIII's time is simplified as "his Reformation," and the young reader is left oblivious of the religious ferment represented by the group of Cambridge gospellers who taught the new evangel before Henry's marital troubles came to notice and while the royal theologian was still the most highly placed defender of medieval thought and ways.

The latter part of the book deserves special attention. Here we have three chapters of distinctly modern matter: "the challenge of the modern mind," "Modernism and Humanism," and in conclusion, "old ways and new directions." In these closing chapters the authors show their interests clearly, although their own answers to the great questions with which they deal are modestly and rather incidentally indicated. In fact, the wish to avoid dogmatism is so apparent that at some points we seem to be left with what is merely a balanced report on irreconcilable positions. But the main direction is clear.

While the authors are careful to present conscientiously the various forms of Humanism and Positivism, they point forward along the line of "a new understanding of biblical faith," such as they see emerging amid recent study and thought. No final relief from the tension between philosophy and religion is forecast, but it is pointed out that the tension can be usefully creative. The reader is gently guided to an appreciation of the traditional, and to this end the arguments of opponents are made to contribute. Thus the distinction stressed by Logical Positivists between empirical meaning and emotive meaning is adopted and applied to the symbolism of religion in support of a conservative view. It is concluded that the weight of evidence from



history and philosophy is on the side of those who cling to the use of the old religious symbols as still possessing "power and truth."

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**Christianity and Existentialism.** By J. M. SPIER. Translated with an Introduction and Notes by David Hugh Freeman. Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1953. xix-140 pp. \$3.00.

The author was born at The Hague in 1902. He belongs to the Dooyeweerd School of the Idea of Law. This idea becomes, in the volume under consideration, the criterion for characterizing and testing Existentialism with a capital E—that is, to Spier, a philosophy seen to be common to men as far apart as Kierkegaard and Sartre, Heidegger, and Marcel.

The book considers the question, What does this philosophy called Existentialism teach? (Part I), and further, What are we to think of this teaching in the light of Christianity? (Part II). The first part proceeds with a brief presentation of the background of Existentialism as dominated by the figures of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche (two or three pages for each), here merely considered as forerunners; then to a more detailed study of "Existentialism proper" as illustrated by Jaspers and Heidegger; the French Existentialists, Marcel, Lavelle, and Sartre; with a closing chapter on the theistic Existentialism of Loen. The sketches of this second section (Chapters II and III) offer some finely woven pages that would do credit to any historian of philosophy worth his salt. They may be found helpful by readers as yet unfamiliar with the personalities involved. This is still more true of Chapter IV, devoted to a consideration of Loen. The second part of the book attempts a general characterization and critique of the various manifestations of the philosophy just considered. It concludes with no less than nine specific reasons for rejecting it in toto as the apostate gravedigger of Western European culture.

The distinction made above between Chapters II and III on the one hand, and Chapter IV (Part I) on the other, implies the first of our reservations. Whether or not the author derived his presentation from a firsthand study of the works involved, bibliographical indications and direct source references are only provided in the case of the obviously more familiar Loen. All that is found otherwise are a few references to previous commentators, or even to plain textbooks. And so the reader undergoes such ordeals as that of seeing a delicate, lucid, and truly luminous genius like the Frenchman Maine de Biran, characterized in the very German language of Windelband-Heimsoeth's *Lehrbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie*, as placing accent "upon the *einheitliche Aktivität des Bewusstseins*." Surely, there ought to be a law about this kind of thing.

Now, for the main question, one which should retain our attention because of the seriousness of the issues involved or immediately suggested by the consideration of contents and method of approach: how is the author led to postulate (and ultimately reject in its entirety), that general philosophical position he calls Existentialism? The answer is that to him, from the start, Existentialism is Humanism, and modern Humanism has been built upon the motives of "nature" and "freedom" as the ideal of an autonomous human personality. Strictly speaking, the main body of the book adds nothing to a conclusion which was already implied in the Dooyeweerd-inspired

presupposition. The subsequent hearing of unfortunate Existentialists proves to be so much "window dressing." Or, to put it in a more dignified way, the material is selected and arranged so as to fit into the Procustean mold forced upon it.

This implies, for example, that Kierkegaard should not only be cut to size, but relegated to the rank of a forerunner now remote in time. His biography is turned into a one-page tragedy—a real one. Thus, for instance, the father's confession of the twenty-second birthday is emphasized as essential to an over-all picture of doom and despair, but nothing is said of the complete, heroic second confession on the twenty-fifth birthday. Yet this second confession not only obliterated the evil done, but brought about a profound reconciliation between father and son, and led young Kierkegaard back to God—nay, to the outburst of divine jubilation recorded as of May 19, at 10:30 a. m., two weeks after the memorable birthday.

This reviewer wishes he could cut short at this point the consideration of a distorted picture such as this "life" of Kierkegaard. The best he can do is to leave the informed reader to judge for himself the following interpretation of the Kierkegaardian theme of "becoming a Christian": "he never became a minister as he did not consider himself a Christian, even though he desired to be one" (*sic*) (p. 7). And so Kierkegaard may be summed up as one to whom existence was the individual subjectivity of the autonomous man postulated by modern Humanism. The last step of the process of assimilation is reached by means of the already mentioned relegation of Kierkegaard to the remoteness of a precursor who *ipso facto* ceases to belong to "Existentialism proper." This, of course, implies an utter disregard for the true greatness of Kierkegaard. He is one of the very few whose insights so deeply penetrate into the coming generations that their message only begins to be understood and influential long after their death.

Similar devices are used throughout. Such a masterful and rich personality as Marcel, for example, falls in due time victim of the Dooyeweerd "steamroller" criterion. This man whom Jesus would have loved was born and trained away from any religious influence. Yet, having found his way even through the powerful guidance of Brunschvicg (name misspelled on page 43), he committed himself all along the way to the truth once acknowledged, asking for baptism at the age of forty. In a series of important works, none of which is even mentioned in this book, he went a long way toward the formulation of what Gilson and other outstanding scholars characterized as *Christian Existentialism*, in a volume devoted to Marcel in 1947. Nevertheless, Spier's method will impose Marcel's "forced repatriation" to modern Humanism. This is the way he does it: Marcel neither presupposes revelation nor proceeds from it in the elaboration of his philosophy; to which the plain answer is, of course, that Marcel is a Roman Catholic and should accordingly keep natural philosophy distinct from Christian revelation. The main fact to keep in mind is that Marcel writes from *within* Christianity and should be read and interpreted accordingly.

Finally, it is not enough to excoriate Sartre to serve the Christian cause. Marcel himself opens a study of Sartre's much-debated book, *Being and Nothingness*, with the statement that it may well constitute the most significant contribution made to general philosophy by the generation of men under forty years of age. (*Homo Viator*, p. 233 of original French edition.) There are in Sartre amazing analyses that reach far into our present-day plight. From these alone, a Christian may learn a great deal. Above all, it should be realized that in the lifework of Sartre to date,

we have the ultimate characterization of what a godless world of nature and of man would look like. Nothing comparable has been written since Pascal's immortal pages on the "misery of man without God," although from the opposite side of the human scene. Once read from the Christian point of view, then, the whole landscape of reality elaborated by Sartre may be seen as *the* alternative in life's great either/or. The apologetic value of the resulting contrast still awaits full treatment on the part of a Christian writer of vision. What would emerge from such a presentation may well constitute the most impressive proof in *absurdum* of Christian truth.

As this reviewer has come to see it, the only permissible generalization on the subject at hand should refer to the *nature* of existential thinking as immediately proceeding from the personal intuition of consciousness. The experience involved is a functional response in the Malinowski sense of the word, first of all. As such, it is influenced by biological, biographical, and social factors in terms of which spiritual realities may be apprehended. Hence a response that will assert itself, with or without an awareness of God, in terms of truth to be *done*, of that which is "truth for me," as Kierkegaard would say—and this, for better or for worse. To illustrate, it will readily appear that Bible truth is essentially existential truth. This is why the most earnest Bible Christians—Augustine, Pascal, Kierkegaard—were existential Christians. But, then, there are at the other pole of the human scene those who proceed, also with their whole being, upon the basic assumption that this world is without God and void. Of these, Sartre is in our day the most characteristic representative. In other words, there are two fundamentally diverging kinds of existentialism (with a small *e*), one ultimately rooted in God as the supreme Existence, the other irretrievably bound to end the way of all flesh, in the slimy disintegration of nothingness. This elementary distinction cuts at the very core of all existentialism. To ignore it one way or the other, and force the most diverging forms of existential thinking into one mold, amounts to nothing short of philosophical totalitarianism.

The volume has been ably translated by Professor David Hugh Freeman of Wilson College. The high quality of his clear and comprehensive Introduction adds to the impression of hope that some day, perhaps, he may with profit address himself to the task of writing a book of his own on the subject.

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**The Names of Jesus.** By VINCENT TAYLOR. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1953.  
ix-179 pp. \$3.00.

This scholarly and clearly written volume contains material originally given in lecture form. The author studies fifty-five names, titles, or metaphors applied to Jesus in the New Testament. His discussion yields results of great importance for historical study and theological development, but they do not rest upon generalities. In every instance Dr. Taylor begins by a patient study and classification of the New Testament data.

The first of two parts of the book deals with "The Principal Names and Titles of Jesus." More than once Dr. Taylor points out how a title of limited scope takes on added range when used of Jesus himself. The Christian faith expands the title and gives it a fullness of meaning previously unknown. Even so, many such titles fall into disuse because still inadequate. Here we see a prominent emphasis of the

book: The names and titles are not the cause but rather the inadequate expression of the faith and worship of the church.

Special interest attaches to the discussion of the "Son of Man" title. Dr. Taylor holds that in the earlier part of the public ministry (only then?), Jesus used it with a strong eschatological sense; later, the idea of the suffering Son of Man appeared in his teaching to his disciples. He used the term because it "expresses the idea of lordship, of rule over the Messianic community, and its associations are supernatural" (p. 35).

In New Testament use the title "Son" ("Son of God"), which Jesus used in the belief that he was "the Son of God in a pre-eminent sense" (p. 65), was not so central as the title "Lord." "The first Christians fervently believed in 'the Son,' but they invoked 'the Lord'" (p. 57). And "implicit in the recognition of the lordship of Jesus is the acknowledgement of His essential divinity" (p. 51). This recognition goes back to the earliest days of the church.

Dr. Taylor finds clear evidence that Jesus thought of himself as the Messiah, and from the first "primitive Christianity recognized that Jesus was the Messiah of Jewish hopes" (p. 67). But the Messianic titles proved inadequate. They were not repudiated, but gave way to still higher titles, to express a "plus" that the church felt to be present in Jesus. "Christology is the despairing attempt of theologians to keep pace with the Church's apprehension of Christ" (p. 71).

Part Two, "Other Names and Titles of Jesus," deals with Messianic Titles, Messianic and Communal Names, Soteriological Titles, and Christological Titles Proper. Purely Messianic names were replaced by those with a communal significance; emphasis on what Jesus did for men comes to expression; titles that show the church groping for an adequate expression of the greatness of Christ keep appearing. But the theological interest is never a mere scholar's interest or an academic exercise. Liturgical, devotional, and practical motives predominate; "the creative theological work of the period was done in an atmosphere of veneration and worship" (p. 171). (Is such work ever properly done in any other atmosphere?)

In a final paragraph Taylor calls attention to the fact that "the Church has never been able to add other names in any significant degree. The one exception is the name 'the Redeemer.' . . . The classic names are those of the New Testament . . . and they are the only names with a foreseeable future" (pp. 174f.).

No review of this book can indicate adequately how rich it is in detailed information and fresh insights. It will contribute much to students of the New Testament and Christology. It will stimulate the thinking and preaching of any pastor who studies it.

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**His Word Was With Power.** By HENRY HALLAM SAUNDERSON. Boston: The Beacon Press, 1952. 248 pp. \$3.50.

Dr. Henry Hallam Saunderson was the founder of the Wayside Pulpit. He has been president of the Boston Browning Society. He has been pastor of various significant churches. Now in the full ripeness of his mind he has published a rich and vital book which is something more than another life of Christ.

Long years of patient study of the times of Jesus have gone into this arresting

and individual book. With a competent knowledge of the general history of New Testament scholarship, Dr. Saunderson is happily free from the obsessions of various schools. He takes a broad view of the narratives and the whole story as related in the Gospels comes to life in his words. He sees Jesus substituting vital understanding for legal correctness and so coming into sharp conflict with the Pharisees. He has worked out a carefully integrated and reasoned account of the life of Jesus based upon a fundamental conflict with a religious aristocracy to whom his insights were unwelcome, and who felt their own position and leadership threatened by him.

Of course Dr. Saunderson works within the frame of his own central religious conceptions. But the depth and the warmth of his spirituality and the richness and fullness of his own devotion give the book a quality which should secure for it a wide reading and a ready welcome among readers of many schools. The coherent fashion in which Dr. Saunderson sets forth his vision of the one whose word was with power is a happy contrast to the fragmentary quality of much writing about the central figure in the Gospels. It would be good if one could feel that many contemporary young men were applying the same sort of patient intelligence and spiritual meditation to the life of our Lord and that we might hope that their study will one day produce books of such happy vitality as that of Dr. Saunderson.

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**Christian Vocation: Studies in Faith and Work.** By W. R. FORRESTER. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953. 223 pp. \$3.00.

This is an interesting book, which seeks to enrich our workaday life with the cheery light of the divine Call. It intends to make clear our human duty by reference to the sovereign Call of God. It is a study, biblical and historical, of the best that has been thought and said in human story about the Call of God and the callings of men. It is thus a book on human work and faith, and endeavors to relate our human expressions to the high calling of God.

After an introduction, which brilliantly sets forth our modern disenchantment, the author proceeds, in the seven chapters of Part 1, to set forth his idea of Vocation, first as the Call of God, and then in Part 2 as human work or callings. In the course of this treatment, the book includes chapters on such themes as The Biblical Doctrine of Vocation—as set forth both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. He deals with the question, "Is Pacifism a heresy or a vocation?" And in Part 2 there are chapters on the Greek, the Hebrew, the Early Christian, the Reformers', the Protestant, and the Modern ideas of Work.

Thus, this is an academic study, though the Professor clearly intends the book to have the practical purpose of showing that all human work should be uplifted and ennobled by the realization of Divine Vocation; and so long as one is not too critical, he will enjoy this book. In general, one may say that the purpose is most learnedly accomplished, with many erudite references, which will please the type of reader to whom he appeals.

However, this reviewer was troubled by what seemed to him a subtle confusion of thought which lay hidden beneath the entire book. Perhaps if the Biblical Doctrine of Vocation, set forth in the second chapter, had been worked on some more, and then the clearer, sharper result kept steadily in view, this seeming confusion would have been eliminated. For instance, it might have brought the right qualification to



the idea that "plumbing" and "the ministry" were equally "vocations"; or the author might not have been willing himself to go so far as to read into Paul's advice to a slave—to glorify God in his position—a significance which amounts to saying that slavery is a vocation! It is true that slavery or any secular employment can be made a sphere for the exercise of spiritual vocation; but that they "are," or that such a social wrong "is" a vocation is certainly a broad and questionable deduction. (See end of Chapter 2.)

This confusion of the calling and the Call, the sphere and the vocation which may be exercised in the sphere, is present throughout. Thus, to the author, a division of callings into secular and sacred is false, since "there is only one morality," exercised in every calling. However, one does have to decide: Is plumbing the vocation, or is it a calling of daily life which may, or may not be, dedicated to Almighty God? Is the distinction between sacred and secular false? Or is not such a division simply realistic? Ideally, of course, such a division should not prevail, and would not if all men sought the divine intention for themselves, and endeavored to carry out the divine will in their calling. By this means they would uplift their calling out of the secular into the sacred.

When the author states, "The vocation of some may not necessarily be the duty of all," I feel that he is talking of the calling, and not of the Call; but by using the word "vocation" he is confusing the two terms. However, apart from this there are lots of good things in the book. Chapter 7, for instance, might be a salutary sedative for the high blood pressure of the ecumenically minded. It deals with the subject, "Vocation as the clue to ecclesiastical diversity!"

For a preacher the book may be inspirational, in the sense that it could inspire him to consider more carefully how he might help to restore wonder to the human world of work, by showing that "a real sense of vocation would radically change most of our circumstances by relating them to standards, and transforming them into terms of service to God."

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## Book Notices

Bishop Arthur J. Moore, one of the great preachers of Methodism, makes a powerful plea for the redemptive mission of the church and calls for "an authentic voice in a bewildered century" in his new book, *Immortal Tidings in Mortal Hands* (The Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, \$1.75). The Bishop takes a world view of the church's mission, narrates his own observations on recent visits to Europe, Japan and Korea, and is not downcast. "The symbol of the gospel is a cross, but not a cross by itself—not a lone, bare, gaunt, naked cross. The symbol of the gospel is a crown, but not a crown by itself—not a proud, cold, despotic crown. The symbol of the gospel is a cross and a crown—a cross lying in a crown, a crown growing around a cross, a cross haloed by a crown, a crown won by a cross. The Church will be triumphant and the song of victory will be in its heart and upon its lips when enough of us follow Christ as he goes forth to lay his healing hand upon the hurt of the world."

Christian thought on the ethical and spiritual problems of war and peace are dealt with by James T. Addison in *War, Peace, and the Christian Mind* (Seabury Press, \$2.00). The book is a posthumous one, as Dr. Addison died a short while after he had finished the manuscript. Bishop Henry Knox Sherrill introduces the book with a friendly foreword and states that "the great majority of us who are not total pacifists will find in this book a balanced and sane judgment."

Zephine Humphrey's *God and Company* carries the approval of Dorothy Canfield Fisher, especially for "its richly full measure of the ardor, imagination, humor and literary skill which have made her many other books so cherished by American readers." (Harper & Brothers, \$1.75.) The book is described as a "personal testimony to what is eternal, put down with charm and conviction." Its twenty brief chapters are suitable for odd-moment reading or for daily use.

How to fit Alcoholics Anonymous into the pattern of organized church life has puzzled many a minister who approves AA but does not quite understand it. G. Aiken Taylor with *A Sober Faith* (Macmillan, \$2.00) probes into the reasons why Alcoholics Anonymous has succeeded where the church has sometimes failed. Rich in incidents of all sorts, giving names that are fictitious but dates and places which are quite real, it deals with all that has to do with the redemption of the alcoholic.

Dr. Theodore P. Ferris has put together *The Story of Jesus* (Oxford, \$2.30) from his sermons preached to the congregation of Trinity Church, Boston, on the Sunday mornings in Lent, on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter, and Whitsunday. "I wanted to tell it once again because I found so many adults who had heard it only as children, and were trying to nurture their adult life on food that was prepared for infants." The book is just what the author calls it, with brief chapters beginning with the birth, the baptism, the temptation, and so on to the crucifixion, burial and resurrection. The last chapter deals with the church, and the book concludes with this long but meaty sentence: "If we can produce in our churches small groups of men and women who, remembering Jesus, are willing to do everything in their power to be of use to him, to bring compassion in place of compulsion, to make every sacrifice, and to go into their family and business situations as the reconciling agents of the Son of God, then we shall become once again the leaven in the lump, and the Church will become the body of Christ, a living body, responsive to his needs and to his demands."

Dr. Russell S. Dicks and T. S. Kepler join to produce a series of essays on death: *And Peace at the Last* (Westminster, \$1.50). The subhead to the book calls death "the unreconciled subject of our times." The various meditations in this volume run from poetry and philosophic essays to a bit of whistling in the dark (Chapter 10) entitled, "Evening is at Hand, but We are not Afraid." "Are we immortal?" it asks on page 55, and answers by saying, "no one knows or can know." Following this affirmation of ignorance, Christians are exhorted to "inure oneself to the inexorable splendor awaiting us and to recognize each moment the companionship of a Man who achieved the impossible . . . who succeeded in living every day of his immortal life as if he were to live forever."

The "Occasional Papers No. 2" of the Scottish Journal of Theology have been put together as a series of new and scholarly studies of *Eschatology*, that eternally intriguing subject in both the New Testament and Christian Theology. The titles of the four papers and list of their distinguished authors will be sufficient to show the breadth and depth of the study: "Eschatology in the New Testament," by William Manson, "Early Patristic Eschatology," by G. W. H. Lampe, "The Eschatology of the Reformation," by T. F. Torrance, "The Modern Discussion of Eschatology," by W. A. Whitehouse. This booklet, like the Journal, is published by Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh, 6s. net.

The Seabury Press with *The Christian Gospel and the Parish Church* (\$2.50), by Charles D. Kean, endeavors to make possible the effective implementation of the Church's teaching in parish life. Done of course from the standpoint of a Protestant Episcopal clergyman, the book contains helpful insights as to how the Christian witness may be revitalized in any local church. The author, the Rector of Grace Episcopal Church in Kirkwood, Missouri, is instructor in Christian Ethics and New Testament in a St. Louis seminary and a member of the Curriculum Development and Adult divisions of the National Council's Department of Christian Education. He is a practical and practicing parson who understands the wider implications of the Christian Gospel before he attempts to gear it into a parish program.

The Macmillan Company has published two more books by J. B. Phillips, whose writings have become increasingly well known on this side of the ocean. *Making Men Whole* (\$1.50) starts, as do many contemporary volumes, with a discussion of the present torn and divided world, and deals with the action and aim of Christian love, the work of reconciliation. It closes with a fitting chapter entitled "Completeness in Christ: in Time and in Eternity." Another timely Phillips book is *Your God Is Too Small* (\$2.00). Phillips is said to have remarkable talent for language "shaped cunningly to pass men's defenses and explode silently and effectually within their minds."

*Sex and Religion Today*, edited by Simon Doniger and published by the Association Press (\$3.00) is a volume in the Pastoral Psychology Series. The title aptly denotes the sweep of the book. Chapters (originally articles in *Pastoral Psychology*) are by Roland H. Bainton, Peter A. Bertocci, Thomas J. Bigham, Gotthard Booth, Joseph F. Fletcher, Seward Hiltner, Reuel L. Howe, John A. P. Millet, Carroll A. Wise, Luther W. Woodward. Amid much haziness which certain highly publicized books have served to throw over this whole subject, the clarity and insight of these writers will be welcomed by many.

*The Bible and the Common Life*, by Huber F. Klemme (Association Press, \$3.00), is a series of essays in the form of short chapters which serve to show what

the author calls "that inevitable connection between the sacred Record and the imperatives of Christian social action." The book is designed for discussion and study. There are such subjects as "God and the Family," "Rights and Responsibilities," "The Bible Talks About Property," "The Nation and the Nations," "The Church and the Human Family."

*Schism in the Early Church*, by S. L. Greenslade (Harper, \$3.75), consists of a series of lectures delivered at the University of Birmingham, England, by an eminent Patristic scholar at the University of Durham. It is a closely written and well documented study of the schisms—i.e., the nontheological splits, as distinct from heretical movements—in the era of the Church Fathers. Their causes are grouped as "personal; nationalism, social and economic influences; the rivalry of sees; liturgical disputes; problems of discipline and the Puritan idea of the church." The church's responses to schism, whether by coercion or reconciliation, are then treated; and finally conclusions are reached which have relevance to the problems of Christian unity today.

NOLAN B. HARMON

